

NATIONAL REVIEW

Back to the Barricades

THE NEW COMMUNISTS AND
THEIR AWFUL APOSTLES

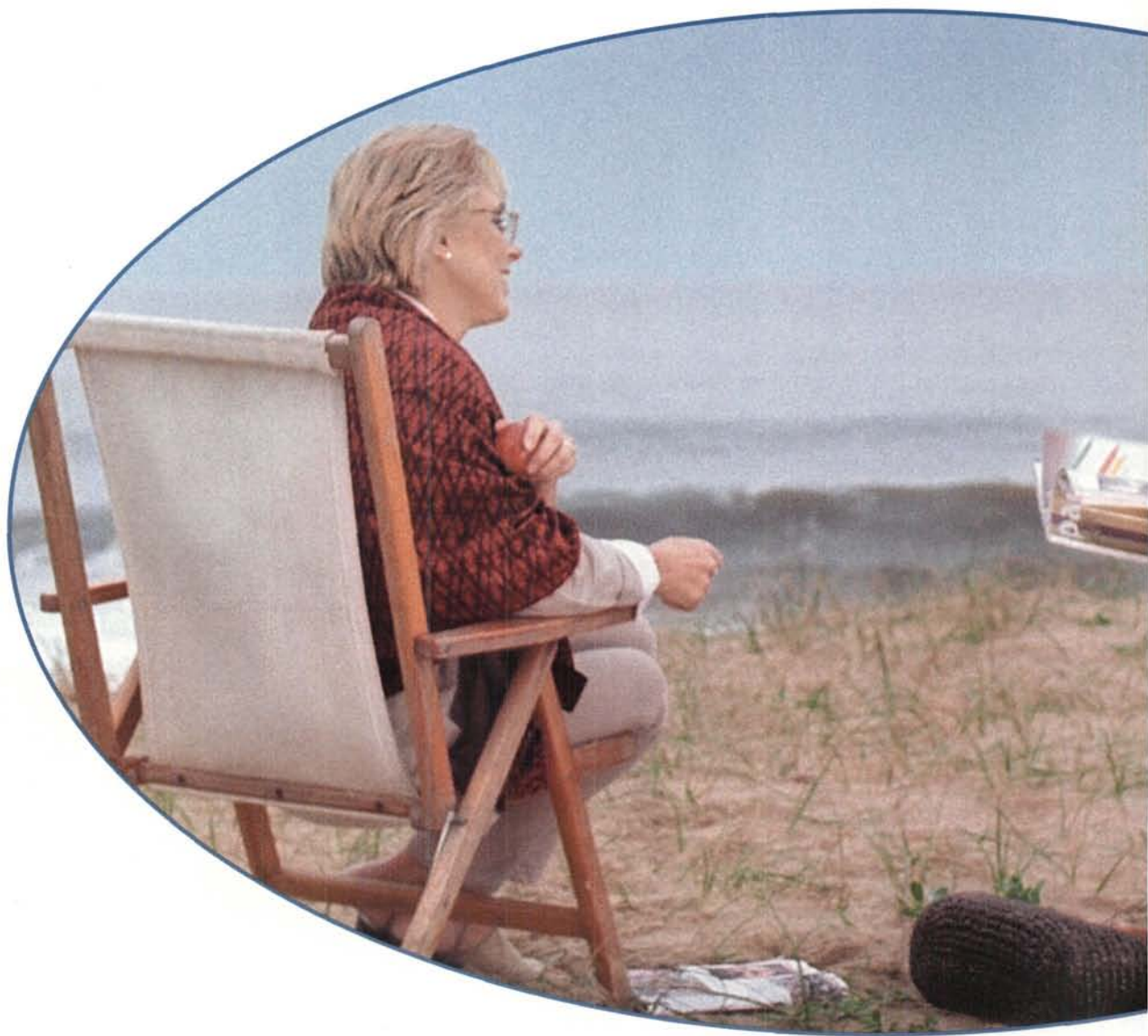
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TOMORROW'S CURES

NATIONAL REVIEW

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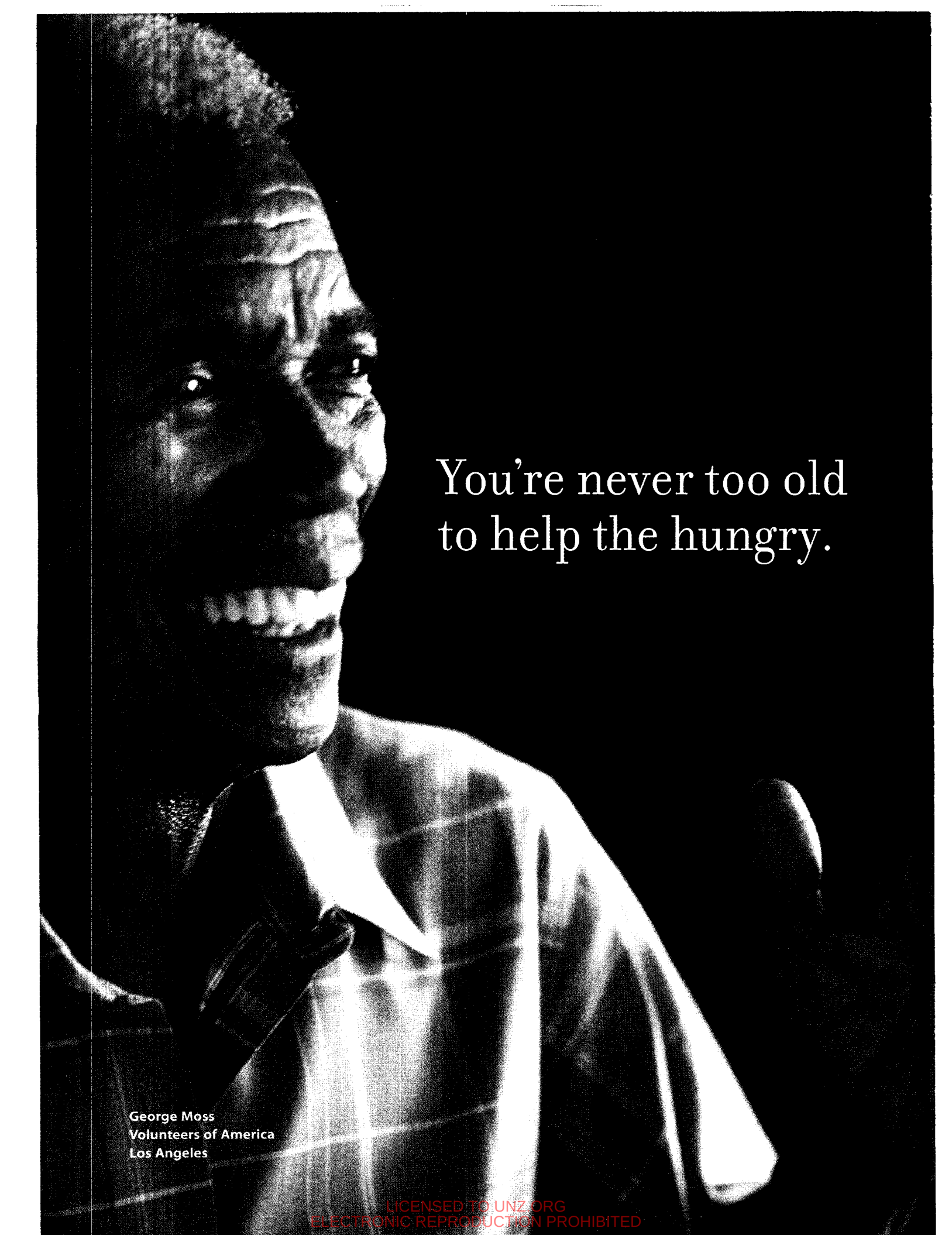


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■ LETTERS ■

THE POT WAR

In his article "Weed Whackers" (Aug. 20), Richard Lowry makes serious factual and judgmental errors. His assertion that most marijuana use is "not the least bit dangerous" is highly irresponsible. Studies have proven that smoking marijuana is far more likely to cause cancer, emphysema, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease than is tobacco. Is he prepared to foot the medical bills of countless future addicts, as tobacco companies are being forced to do now for cigarette smokers? By repeatedly referring to "drug warriors," he falls for a catch phrase now ingrained in the liberal mantra. "Defenders of the oppressed" seems a far more accurate reference to those now dedicating themselves to protect the countless innocent victims of drug use.

Stanley Langland Jr.
Chehalis, Wash.

Richard Lowry, yes! Kudos, cheers, accolades, and praise for your article on marijuana. Your position is consistent with not wanting to control booze, cigarettes, gun ownership, or whether people wear seat belts. A non-foolish consistency among conservatives is a joy!

Now, what do you think about flag burning? Stand up for the legal right to do that, and I will stop calling myself a libertarian and call myself a conservative . . . maybe. At least I will think about it.

Cheri Sparks
West Lafayette, Ind.

CIRCLING SHARKS

Your articles on tort reform by Michael J. Horowitz, Kate O'Beirne, and Jay Nordlinger (Aug. 20) are all missing the main point.

Only in America can one sue and lose without any monetary consequences. In all other countries, a judgment against the plaintiff automatically calls for the plaintiff and his lawyer to pay all court costs, as well as the direct and indirect costs of the defendant and his lawyer. This is why we have over 1 million lawyers in the U.S. while, for example, Japan gets by with only 15,000, Great Britain with 9,000, and Germany with 30,000.

Marc Z. Jeric
Las Vegas, Nev.

The jugular vein of tort reform is that uniquely American scheme: the contingency fee. Only in America is the contingency fee legal. And we wonder why we have a problem.

Eugene Guazzo, M.D.
Chaptico, Md.

SEEKING CHANDRA

According to William Tucker's analysis in "The Post-Columbo Era" (Sept. 3), Chandra Levy would magically reappear if only the Fifth Amendment did not exist or were judicially revised to have no real force. Mr. Tucker ought to move to a police state and see how he likes it. Is he for real?

Carl W. Goss
Los Angeles, Calif.

NATIVE SON

Was John J. Miller's article "Immigrants for President" (Aug. 6) an April-fools' joke four months late? I never expected the one magazine whose position on too-rapid immigration remained eminently sensible to throw sensibility to the winds with such a facile piece. At a time when American culture is under attack as never before, and most immigrants bring their own cultures with them (recall the spectacle of Mexican flags being waved at the protests against Prop. 187 in California), I would hardly expect an immigrant to be such a fervid, "more American than the Americans" presidential candidate as Mr. Miller supposes.

Terry A. Hurlbut
Short Hills, N.J.

LAYING DOWN THE LAW

Now that NR has reestablished poetry as a regular feature, here are some guidelines this reader intends to employ: No rustic stuff: Forget woodpiles, twigs, and clods—I'll pick up Frost if I feel the need. No mythology: Homer-to-Campbell has it covered. No word-pictures: Old issues of *Life* and *National Geographic* will suffice. Hint to all traveling poets: Buy the T-shirt. And don't attempt to send me to the OED. I won't go. If the word never appeared before in NR, why now?

Leo Bradley
Zephyrhills, Fla.

"A Feast Fit for a Glutton."

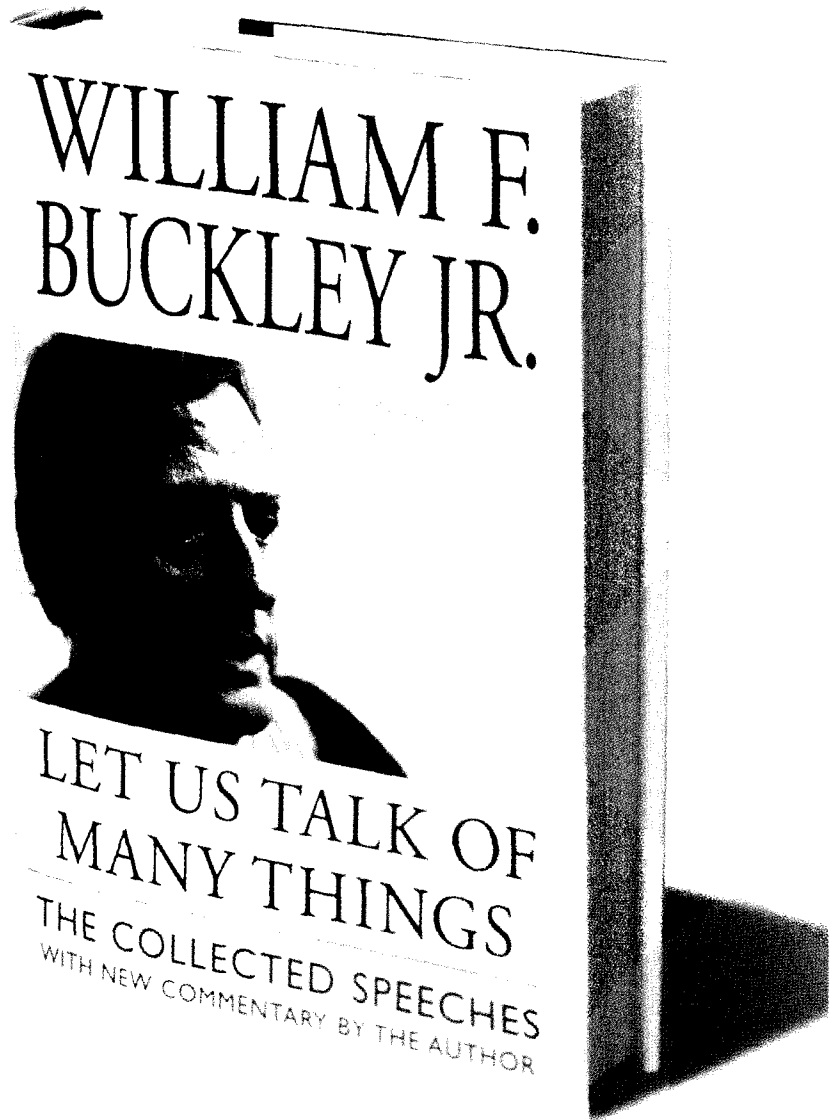
—Norman Podhoretz

In a bravura Buckley touch, he opens this collection of his speeches with a brutally funny essay on the horrors of the speaking circuit. The effect is to make us even more grateful for the lucidity and charm that follow. Mr. Buckley also has a rare advantage over—well, over almost anyone else who might contemplate a project like this: It is impossible to read these speeches without hearing Mr. Buckley's famous voice. That adds to the pleasure.

In one of the speeches collected here, Bill Buckley instructs a class of 18-year-olds on their paramount responsibility—to enjoy yourself as you go. There lies the key to Buckley's extraordinary career, which like this book spans a half century (and counting), from pre-Korea to post-Lewinsky. Whether as novelist, editor, prose stylist, or public speaker, he always makes clear the pleasure he derives from intellectual engagement. The pleasure is infectious, and anyone who reads this exhilarating book will catch it too.

From first to last the speeches in this book make for elucidating, entertaining, thought-provoking reading. Whether eulogizing a departed friend or joshing at the expense of a still-living friendly adversary, or bemoaning the current state of the culture, or singing the praises of some worthy aspect of our society, or ruminating on the state of the world, Bill Buckley's collected speeches are of enduring value. They are well wrought, sometimes intricately devised, absorbing.

Let Us Talk of Many Things is an astonishing book. Absolutely nobody's speeches read well in their entirety. Buckley's do. Completely, compellingly, wonderfully readable, every single one of them.



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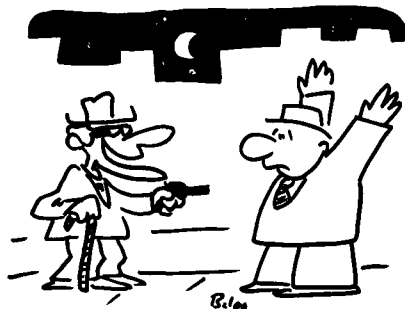
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■ FOR THE RECORD ■

■ President **Bush** says he plans to give his own tax-rebate check to charity. . . . More Bush: "We took exactly the right action at the right time by pushing the largest tax cut in a generation." . . . Even more Bush: "We will withdraw from the ABM treaty on our timetable, at a time convenient to America." . . . Bonus Bush: "There will be no blanket amnesty for illegals. I've said that point-blank. I will say it as many times as I need to say it." . . . In *USA Today* interview, Bush names books he's read recently: *John Adams*, by **David McCullough**, *In the Heart of the Sea*, by **Nathaniel Philbrick**, and *Founding Brothers*, by **Joseph Ellis**. . . . In Fabrizio-McLaughlin poll of Hispanic parents, 67 percent approve of Bush's job performance.

■ On day **Jesse Helms** announces retirement, North Carolina native **Elizabeth Dole** asks Russell County, Kan., to terminate her voter registration there. . . . Former senator **Lauch Faircloth** (R., N.C.): "I believe that Senator Helms and President **Reagan** stand tall as the two greatest conservative leaders of the 20th century." . . . Senate Democratic Campaign Committee describes GOP senators **Bob Smith** (N.H.), **Gordon Smith** (Ore.), and **Tim Hutchinson** (Ark.) as "the top tier of pickup opportunities for us" next year, in *Washington Times*. . . . **Lamar Alexander** considers Senate bid, if **Fred Thompson** (R., Tenn.) retires. But Sen. **Bill Frist**, head of GOP Senate campaign committee, says Rep. **Ed Bryant** would be best candidate if Thompson goes. . . . Former representative **Glenn Poshard** (D., Ill.), a pro-lifer, says he will "consider" running for lieutenant governor on ticket with former commerce secretary **Bill Daley**. . . . **George Skelton** of *Los Angeles Times* on Gov. **Gray Davis** (D., Calif.): "Every time somebody flips a switch and a room lights up, his reelection prospects get a little brighter." . . . In potential 2004 Senate contest, Wisconsin Policy Research Institute poll has HHS secretary **Tommy Thompson** (R.) leading incumbent Sen. **Russ Feingold** (D.), 47 percent to 44 percent.

■ NBC's **Tim Russert** to House minority leader **Dick Gephardt**, on August 19: "Is [**Gary Condit**] a man of honor?" Gephardt: "He is." . . . Gephardt, after Condit interview with **Connie Chung**: "What [Condit] said last night was disturbing and wrong." . . . ABC's **Bill Maher**: "If it turns out that this beautiful young girl [**Chandra Levy**] is gone . . . you have to look to **Ken Starr** for a little bit of guilt. . . . Because, you know, Ken Starr made it so that you, in the old days, you had an affair with somebody, and you know, okay, you had an affair. The press didn't report it. They didn't make a political



"I got tired of waiting for the dang Government—I'm privatizing my own Social Security."

criminal case of it. Now it's almost like you have to get rid of them." . . . **Al Sharpton** explains why his failure to hold public office shouldn't disqualify him as presidential candidate, on CNN: "I mean, **Dwight Eisenhower** was never elected to anything before he was elected president." . . . More Sharpton, on Fox News: "In a time that we no longer have a Cold War, there is no real threat to American security."

■ "I do worry about the effect of being forced to leave Vieques, not only on our domestic training ranges but on international access," says Marine general **James Jones**. "People on Okinawa watch what happens on Vieques, and they will draw conclusions from that." . . . **Bill Clinton**, in conversation last January with Israeli prime minister **Ehud Barak** on possible pardon for **Marc Rich**, according to transcript published in *Newsweek*: "I know quite a

few things about that. . . . It's best that we not say much about that." . . . Federal government and District of Columbia plan to spend \$38 million on security during September's World Bank and IMF meetings when as many as 100,000 protesters may converge on capital. . . . State Department halts HIV testing of foreign nationals hired to work at U.S. embassies. . . . Support for marijuana legalization hits highest mark in 30 years, with 34 percent approval, in *USA Today/CNN/Gallup* poll. . . . Carnegie Library in Savannah, Ga., agrees to name addition after Justice **Clarence Thomas**. . . . Former governor **Pete Wilson** (R., Calif.) approaches best-selling historian **Stephen Ambrose** about penning new biography of Reagan, but Ambrose declines. . . . In Harris poll of heroes, top five are **Jesus Christ**, **Martin Luther King**, **Colin Powell**, **John F. Kennedy**, and **Mother Teresa**. Reagan finished sixth.

■ Sen. **Mitch McConnell** (R., Ky.) urges U.S. to side with Israelis: "Under administrations of both parties for some time now, the American policy has essentially been one of equivalency—in other words, attributing to both sides the violence and kind of apportioning blame equally. And the secretary of state still seems to be doing that. I must tell you that I've had enough of that personally. . . . I would quit being so evenhanded, because I don't think the violence is being perpetrated in an evenhanded way." . . . Rep. **Henry Hyde** (R., Ill.) in Taipei speech: "Taiwan's mere existence as a prosperous and stable Chinese democracy is a challenge to the regime in Beijing because it is proof that its propaganda about the impossibility of democracy in China is false." . . . *Washington Times* says China tests medium-range nuclear missile in largest war games it has held in years.

■ **Shelley Emling** of *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* notes **Newt Gingrich** has become "Top 500" reviewer on Amazon.com, but does not write negative book reviews: "Of course, Bill Clinton's memoirs have yet to be published." **NR**

What Do Tests Tell Us?

Bill Evers is a research
fellow at the Hoover
Institution and a member
of the institution's K-12
Education Task Force.

One thing standardized tests can tell us is whether the grades that teachers give their students actually indicate how much the students know.

When a teacher gives a grade to a student, that grade is based not only on achievement and effort but also on what the teacher expects students in that class to know. But here a problem arises. The teacher may have rather low (or sometimes rather high) expectations for students. The teacher may not want to grade more strictly (or more leniently) than other teachers. **Grading scales may have drifted in the school so that most grades are As and Bs, without improvements in achievement.** Or, more rarely, grading scales may have drifted in the opposite direction; a C at one school may actually indicate higher achievement than a B at another school.

How hard the student has worked and where he or she is on the class curve are considerations that often figure into a teacher's grading. But they don't tell us how well the student has mastered the subject matter.

We know, for example, that in Massachusetts and Texas, teachers have been giving students much higher grades in math than those same students receive on state math tests of the same material. (For Texas, see <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/studies/correlation.pdf>.) Thus, students in Texas who have failed state tests in algebra have been given passing grades by their

teachers, especially in schools with large numbers of poor and minority students. Such grades cheat students. This is the soft bigotry of low expectations.

Judy Coddling, the former principal of Pasadena High School in California, tells in the opening chapter of her book *Standards for Our Schools* (coauthored by Marc Tucker) about trying to determine why her school's students were not succeeding in math. Wanting to know how much students coming into her school as freshmen knew and what classes they should be placed in, she gave them objective diagnostic tests. The "horrendous results" showed that incoming freshmen were much less prepared in math than their middle-school teachers had said that they were.

Perhaps the most amazing aspect is how the opponents of standardized tests respond. They say that the tests are wrong and that the classroom grades are right. Peter Sacks, for example, claims in his book *Standardized Minds* that the Texas state tests are invalid and that "teachers in the trenches" are accurately grading the students.

A divergence between grades from classroom teachers and scores on standardized tests can be a wake-up call for parents, taxpayers, and school boards—telling us that students don't really know the subject matter and that teachers are too soft in their grading practices. Getting rid of standardized tests is like getting rid of thermometers, X-ray machines, and blood-pressure gauges in a doctor's office.

— Bill Evers

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

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THE WEEK

■ Bill Clinton went shopping with the actor Anthony Hopkins for bikinis and sarongs in Rio de Janeiro. The 42nd president bought two bikinis and three sarongs, spending \$113. There's no joke here; we are simply reporting.

■ Elizabeth Dole is, at the moment, the leading candidate for the Republican nomination to the Senate seat now held by Jesse Helms. She is well known and well liked—even a bit of a star—and she is thought to be the Republicans' best shot. But her presidential campaign was a debacle. When she was not avoiding issues, she was tacking left on them. She said that Republicans should stop talking about abortion because it drew attention away from “urgent issues” such as domestic violence. Her position on guns was confused: She called for a ban on weapons that had in fact been in place for almost seven decades, while taking swipes at conservative “special-interest groups” that allegedly stood in the way. Her campaign didn't make it past 1999. Mrs. Dole may very well fare better this time and win the Senate race. She would be a conservative senator only if Republican primary voters in North Carolina forced her to be one.

■ After Gary Condit's interview with Connie Chung, House minority leader Richard Gephardt called his performance “disturbing,” “wrong,” and “evasive.” Since Condit was no more evasive with Chung than he had been for the previous four months, Gephardt had to be responding to Condit's style. How could future liars manage their crises better? They must show emotion (Condit had the warmth of a WANTED poster). They should admit their affairs (all together now: “Everybody does it . . .”). Their wives must stick with them (cf., Hillary Clinton: “That is not going to be proven true”). So must black people (isn't there one black cleric in Modesto who could have offered spiritual counseling?). Above all, they must not murder their lovers. The central question of the Condit affair, however, is not what his interview tells us about him, but what should be done. There is reason to suspect Condit of foul play. Chandra Levy vanished, leaving her wallet behind; Condit's other lovers have said that he required them to meet him without ID. Condit had motive: Levy was involved with him, and his stay-at-home wife was coming to Washington. Condit has behaved guiltily, stonewalling long after concealment of the affair could have been a motive. Hypothesis: Condit summoned Levy to meet him; she met her Maker instead. Grand juries have taken up cases with much less to go on. A federal grand jury should be convened to examine Gary Condit under oath.

■ When John DiIulio resigned as head of the president's faith-based initiative, much of the press took his departure as

proof that a Democrat could not work in this partisan White House. (Funny: They didn't say the same thing when David Gergen left the Clinton administration.) But DiIulio had said from the start that he might leave midyear. It was not a plum job for him: It took him away from his family in Philadelphia; it took a toll on his health; it brought him widespread criticism, even from friends and allies. We were among the critics, considering DiIulio both naively hopeful that the initiative would improve government programs and insufficiently alert to the danger that it could undermine religious groups. It must be said that DiIulio did not always respond to these criticisms constructively. As he returns to academia, we wish him well—and wish for a successor who takes conservative concerns about the initiative more seriously.

■ Equity markets greeted the Federal Reserve's latest drop in interest rates by themselves dropping. Alan Greenspan's mistake has been to reduce interest rates gradually and grudgingly, a quarter point at a time. Since there are few signs of imminent inflation, he should have brought rates down quickly—and then stopped. The Fed's current policy gives anyone making investments sensitive to interest rates an incentive to wait for the next rate cut. The markets' reaction is evidence of the folly of using monetary policy to try to fine-tune the economy.

■ In the mayoral primaries on September 11, New Yorkers will make their first pass at picking the successor to Rudy Giuliani. The only presentable candidate is Republican Herman Badillo, who, like Giuliani, is a liberal who is passionately right on one vital issue (crime for Giuliani, school standards for Badillo). The likely Republican winner is Michael Bloomberg, a weightless rich man whose pockets the New York GOP wishes to pick. Four Democrats, indistinguishable except for ethnic affiliation, are contending to revive the party of David Dinkins. Police commissioner Bernard Kerik, reading these entrails, has announced that he will leave office when Rudy does. New York's unlooked-for Indian summer of security and confidence is ending.

■ In his political maturity, Jerry Brown, once known as Governor Moonbeam, is doing some interesting things as mayor of Oakland, San Francisco's blighted sister city. Recently he has been catching flak from local liberals for establishing a charter school, the Oakland Military Institute, run by the California National Guard. Students come to school in uniform; the day begins not with a bell, but with a taped bugle call. Brown defends the regimen—“the goal is to enable every student to qualify for the University of California, Harvard, or Yale”—and he has lined up Gov. Gray

Davis and Sen. Dianne Feinstein as the institute's allies. "It gives [students] structure and a good education, which Oakland schools do not offer," said one pleased parent. "At my son's old school, all the kids see is drug-dealing. Here they'll be too tired to even think about it." Any Democratic deviation in the direction of education reform should be encouraged. But surely the best reform would be to allow parents not lucky enough to live with Mayor Brown to take their kids out of dead-end schools, by offering them vouchers. Even the Oakland Military Institute, by itself, isn't valiant enough to prevail over the teachers unions.

■ The ghostwriter of Bill Clinton's \$10 million memoirs will be Taylor Branch, who can be expected to give the text historical sweep. Branch is best known for *Parting the Waters* and *Pillar of Fire*, two heroic volumes on the civil-rights movement (the former won a Pulitzer prize). But Clinton's choice of Branch itself speaks volumes. He wants to be remembered as a civil-rights figure. Recall, though, that Clinton won the presidency in 1992 by offering himself as a New Democrat, and that an essential feature of that newness was his willingness to defy organized black opinion. (At a crucial point in the primaries, he criticized Sister Souljah for her violently anti-white racism.) But as soon as President Clinton hit trouble, after the 1994 elections, he surrounded himself with totemic black people: Jesse Jackson was a spiritual adviser, Rep. Charlie Rangel a political one (steering Mrs. Clinton to a New York Senate race and Bill to a Harlem office). Like the sultans of old, he even had a Negro minding his seraglio, Vernon Jordan. Clinton's calculation was that blacks would rally around anyone, however corrupt and feckless, who promised them access and made the right gestures. Blacks did. This is Bill Clinton's contribution to civil rights.

■ More info has surfaced about Roger Clinton's lobbying his brother to pardon an alleged associate of the Gambino crime family. Beyond routine Clinton-bashing, there is a sociological point here about the Democratic party and its links to ethnic mobs. Geraldine Ferraro had mob ties through her husband. Joe Kennedy mobilized his mob connections, acquired through rum-running during Prohibition, in support of his son's presidential campaign; JFK went on to share a mistress with Sam Giancana. In the 19th century, the shock troops of big-city Democratic machines were Irish bruisers. The Democrats must take the bitter with the sweet; the party of inclusion and diversity necessarily includes its constituents' rougher elements. Not that the Democrats neglected old-stock Anglo-Saxons: From the 1870s until the 1930s, the Democratic party was also the home of the Ku Klux Klan.

■ The Rev. Al Sharpton has announced that he will form an exploratory committee to investigate a presidential run in 2004. The era of everyone's running for president, which was inaugurated by Jesse Jackson in 1984, continues. One argument that we may indeed be at the end of history is that the last remaining superpower could entertain, as candidates for its highest office, such a parade of unlikelies: Jackson,

Robertson, Perot, Buchanan, Bauer, Keyes. Next to them, Franklin Pierce takes on a patina of seriousness.

■ Following a disastrous defeat in the June general election, the leader of Britain's Conservative party, William Hague, resigned, and the party is now in the throes of choosing a new leader by ballot among its 300,000 members. The two contenders are Kenneth Clarke and Iain Duncan Smith. On résumé points, Clarke ought to be the strong favorite. In Parliament since 1970, he has headed an impressive array of government departments, covering Transport, Health, Employment, Trade, Education, the Home Office, and the Treasury. Duncan Smith, 47 years old to Clarke's 61, has been in Parliament only nine years and has never held executive office. Before entering politics he served six years as an officer in the elite Scots Guard, then had an undistinguished though unblemished career in senior business management. Why, then, do polls show Duncan Smith ahead among party members by as much as 3 to 1? Because he is, like most British Conservatives, a strong sovereignty man, while Clarke is a prominent Europhile. Clarke's old boss, Baroness Thatcher, has endorsed Duncan Smith for just this reason. For what it is worth, we do the same. Duncan Smith shows a proper skepticism toward a project—the construction of a vast bureaucratic European superstate—that is full of perils both for his own country and for ours.

■ The Palestinians are waging war with Israel. Every day brings its atrocities. They want more, too, in the belief that escalating violence will bring about the destruction of Israel. Any sort of peace process now seems to them a quite superfluous appeasement. The Israeli government is obliged to take measures of self-defense, in the hope that the Palestinians conclude that the costs of waging war outweigh any benefits. Self-defense is different from attack. Yet our secretary of state says that both sides must do everything they can "to restrain the provocation and the counter-response to the provocation." This creates an equivalence between the Palestinians and Israelis that is false and stupid, never mind immoral. With their historical memories, Israelis are not going to wait patiently to be killed.

■ Afghanistan is a country in the grip of the Taliban, a fundamentalist group of gunmen. They kill their opponents, they destroy all other cultures, and they impose their brand of Islam through a religious police force. Starvation and epidemics are held in check only because a variety of international charities give about \$300 million a year in aid. Shelter Now is one of them. The religious police have arrested eight of its voluntary workers from the West—among them Dana Curry and Heather Mercer, two American women in their twenties—and 16 Afghans with whom they were in contact. Apparently the Westerners had Bibles in the local languages, and the two Americans showed a video about the life of Christ. Whether they were Christian missionaries or merely naïve is unclear, but in either case they and the Afghans face the death sentence for their acts. If they are not released, foreign aid should be cut off

and aid workers withdrawn. Things will change for the better only when the Taliban is made to pay for what it is doing to everyone unfortunate enough to come within its reach.

■ Comparing the recent history of, say, Uganda, with that nation's tranquility and prosperity under British rule, many of us nurse the suspicion that the Empire was not altogether a bad thing. We are glad to find that Professor Fouad Ajami is assailed by the same subversive thoughts. Reviewing a book about the empire for the *New York Times*, the good professor notes that: "In vast stretches of the old empire, the ground now burns, and plunder and breakdown are nationalism's harvest." Indeed. Tucked away in odd corners of Africa, India, and the Far East are the graves of British administrators who succumbed to disease, overwork, spears, or machetes while engaged in what they believed, most of them, to be a great civilizing mission. It is pleasing to think that, in the teeth of all the cant about "exploitation" and "oppression," they may at last be receiving some of the honor due them.

■ *New York Times* columnist Bob Herbert must have pumped his fist when a Texas court blocked the execution of Napoleon Beazley, which had been scheduled for Aug. 15. In 1994, Beazley shot a 63-year-old man to death, left his wife alive only because she played dead, and drove off with their car. Herbert was no doubt drawn to the case because Beazley is black, and because his white victims are the parents of a conservative federal judge, J. Michael Luttig. In a pair of columns, Herbert did his best to mitigate Beazley's crimes and condemn his punishment. Beazley killed "in an apparent panic," he wrote, despite the fact that this panic-stricken thug followed the Luttigs into their garage. Herbert also noted, with chilling gratuitousness, that the victims had been driving a Mercedes. And he condemned Judge Luttig for filing a victim-impact statement and staying in touch with prosecutors, thus moving along "the conveyor belt of death." Herbert sees a process "blatantly riddled with racism." A normal person might recognize it as justice—just as he might see Judge Luttig's alleged misconduct as his legal right and filial duty.

POWELL DOESN'T WANNA

*The fire Bill left burning
Around the Wailing Wall
Means some day Colin's gotta
Start looking ten feet tall;
Get into boots that take him
With each step, seven leagues,
Or George's conversation
Is gonna sound like Queeg's.*

—W. H. VON DREELE



■ Andrea Yates systematically murdered her five children, aged 6 months to 7 years, drowning them one by one in her bathtub. In saner times she would have been regarded as a monster of depravity, a destroyer not only of innocent lives, but of one of humanity's—indeed, of Nature's—most fundamental and sacred bonds: that between mother and child. Nowadays, we are urged to feel sorry for her. Those five little corpses were hardly cold before the great army of Victimology had descended on Mrs. Yates, to embrace and console her. "Her death would be only one more tragic and painful event for this family," moaned one of these persons, Dave Atwood of the Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, at a news conference to announce his support for the Andrea Pia Yates Support Coalition. Said coalition has been organized by the Houston branch of the National Organization for Women, an outfit long active in promoting the right of women to dispose of unwanted or inconvenient issue. We must take what comfort we can from the fact that at least Mrs. Yates's attorneys cannot argue that her execution would leave her children orphans.

■ Kathy Boudin, veteran of the Weather Underground, was denied parole for her role in the murderous Brinks robbery of 1981. In that crime, a gang of revolutionary terrorists descended on Rockland County in upstate New York, stealing \$1.6 million from a Brinks truck and killing a guard. They transferred the money to a U-Haul; when it was stopped by New York State Thruway police, Boudin got out of the cab, pretending to surrender; her colleagues then burst from the truck and killed two policemen. Boudin, who has been pretending to live a model life in prison for 17 years, now says that she is "morally responsible for all the tragic consequences" of her actions. No, Miss Boudin: If you are a witting agent in murders, then under the law you are *legally* responsible for them, whether you pulled a trigger or not. She should take at least 17 more years to meditate on this truth.

■ San Jose is thinking of renaming its airport the "Norman Y. Mineta San Jose International Airport." This is to honor the current secretary of transportation, a native son and former mayor of the city. Mineta—a lifelong liberal Democrat and member of a Designated Victim Group (a Japanese-American, he was interned for a year during WWII)—is said to be delighted with the idea. Are we alone in thinking that this business of naming large facilities after active politicians is getting out of control? Vladimir Nabokov suggested that portraits of national leaders should never exceed the size of a postage stamp. We are beginning to think that some similar rule might be applied to cabinet officers: Nothing bigger than an alleyway should be named after them.

■ Spare the rod and—what? Spanking has been under fire at least since Quintilian, who called it "a disgusting and slavish treatment." Rousseau and Freud linked it to adult masochism; even Dr. Spock came out, er, swinging against it. Today, the war continues on websites such as www.nospank.org, and nine European governments have made spanking illegal. But parents can relax, say researchers at the American

Psychological Association. Using data from a twelve-year sample, Berkeley professors Elizabeth Owens and Diana Baumrind concluded that claims of permanent psychological harm from spanking had been irresponsible. While not actively encouraging spanking, Owens and Baumrind noted that previous studies drew little or no distinction between parents using responsible, mild-to-moderate spanks and parents who are impulsively violent or abusive. Longtime anti-spanking activist Murray Straus agreed that, methodologically, the Berkeley paper "may be the best single study available." Owens and Baumrind have restored a measure of reason to an otherwise emotion-driven and frequently politicized debate.

■ For four lucky people, the Powerball jackpot was a ticket to a new life. For millions of others, it was a fleeting chance to daydream of riches. And what's wrong with that? Conservative columnist Michelle Malkin counts the objections. Powerball is unfairly shielded from competition: Running a private-sector equivalent of it is illegal. It's also given benefits never allowed the private sector, such as an exemption from truth-in-advertising regulations. It involves the government in an ad campaign that undermines capitalist virtues by promoting the idea that to work, save, and invest is a sucker's bet. State governments raise billions of dollars from these corrupt, and corrupting, practices—which is one more reason to oppose them.

■ *The New Criterion* is celebrating its 20th anniversary, a remarkable achievement for a magazine of its stringent intellectual standards. The monthly was founded by Hilton Kramer, and its name recalls T. S. Eliot's original *Criterion*. Eliot said that the job of the critic was the elucidation and correction of taste. To both of those functions he gave the broadest definitions. "Elucidation" meant precise cognition. "Taste" meant everything involved in judgment. *The New Criterion* has strenuously pursued these goals under the direction of Kramer and managing editor Roger Kimball. It concerns itself with art, literature, music, theater, politics, and other subjects, and its writers are among the best we have. On its 20th anniversary, let us rejoice.

JESSE HELMS

Senator, Yes

JESSE HELMS announced that he will retire from the Senate next year, at the end of his fifth term. He will be missed by the conservative movement, the country, and millions of now- and once-enslaved people worldwide.

Helms, a former radio broadcaster, was first elected in 1972 at the high tide of Nixonian détente and *dirigisme*, and began laying the groundwork for a conservative revival. He was the first conservative politician to take advantage of the direct-mail techniques of Richard Viguerie, rallying supporters nationwide. At the same time, he worked hard on his local base, giving Ronald Reagan a desperately needed primary vic-

THE COWPOKE DEPARTS



W. has had to leave his beloved ranch, returning to Washington, D.C. Our Roman Genn imagines the scene.

tory in 1976. The importance of that win cannot be overstated: After North Carolina, Reagan fought President Gerald Ford to a near draw, and positioned himself for 1980. But if Reagan had lost North Carolina, on top of five previous primary defeats, there would have been no second run in 1980. Helms saved the Reagan Revolution.

He was a fiery crusader on social issues, speaking with populist bluntness (he called the Mapplethorpe exhibit "an abyss of slime"). But the most immediate threats of the end of the 20th century were foreign, and he made his mark fighting them. Not a nomination nor an appropriation passed without his scrutiny, and his stubbornness earned him the epithet "Senator No." Some members of the foreign-policy establishment acknowledged his usefulness. Walter Russell Mead, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, linked Helms with Arthur Vandenberg and Henry Cabot Lodge as a "broker between a skeptical public opinion and an insistent internationalist elite." When the brokers sign off on a deal, as when Helms finally approved American funding of a reformed U.N. budget, then the deal is truly made.

But Helms's contribution went beyond process. He sought for opportunities to fight Communism, not to buy it off, such as in Central America. After the fall of the Soviet Union he did not consider its puppet, Castro, yesterday's news, but

insisted that he pay for his continuing oppression of his people with economic pressure. He resisted every frittering away of American sovereignty. NATIONAL REVIEW disagreed with him on the Panama Canal Treaty, which we saw as hemispheric noblesse oblige. Yet Helms's focus on American interests became even more relevant in the post-Communist world, when believers in the end of history viewed the globe as a theater for bustling armed social work.

Helms rose to power as conservatives in the South were battling desegregation. He battled as hard as any of them (on his radio show he called the University of North Carolina the University of Negroes and Communists): a shameful legacy, of which he was never ashamed. In his 1990 race against black businessman Harvey Gantt, Helms ran an ad showing white hands crumpling a rejection letter—the job, a voice explained, had gone to a less-qualified minority—and liberals cried foul. They were the racists this time, though, doling out favors on the basis of skin color. Helms was only paying them back in their own coin.

Ronald Reagan had the sunny disposition we look for in presidents. But Helms occupied an equally vital, if lesser, ecological niche, whose requirements for survival include a willingness to be hated. (Only someone of his truly affable and courtly nature could be so willing.) Who in the era of the compassionate junior Bush will take his place?

THE BUDGET

A Surplus of Spin

BUDGET estimators in both the White House and Congress agree that this year the federal government is likely to run a surplus north of \$150 billion. All this money will be used to pay down the national debt. In Washington, this seemingly happy state of affairs is held to be a major problem for the Bush administration. The reason: Almost all of that surplus is payroll-tax revenue generated by Social Security. It is possible that by the end of the fiscal year, Social Security will be all that is keeping the federal government in the black. So Democrats are charging that President Bush is “raiding” Social Security and that he is doing so because his tax cut has bankrupted the rest of the government.

The White House has offered several responses to this argument: 1) The economic slowdown has done more to shrink the surplus than the tax cut. 2) The component of the tax cut that has done the most to shrink the surplus is the tax rebate on which Democrats insisted. 3) The tax cut was *supposed* to shrink the surplus in order to keep the federal government from spending all the money. 4) Spending remains the real threat: In fact, spending increases that Congress legislated last December cut the surplus even more than the economic slowdown has. 5) The surplus remains the second-highest in history.

Bush is trying to have it both ways on the rebates, claiming credit for the checks going out to taxpayers but not taking responsibility for their cost. Otherwise, these are all good

points. They do not, however, solve his political problem. The president pledged to “protect” the Social Security surplus, that is, to use none of it to cover spending on other programs. It was an ill-considered pledge: It commits the federal government to keep overtaxing the country—by \$150 billion this year, and more later—to pay down debt. That debt paydown does very little to benefit future Social Security beneficiaries. The money could be better used to improve our military or to finance tax cuts that would promote growth. And if revenues prove disappointing, the pledge will be difficult, if not impossible, to keep.

President Bush can try to keep the pledge by vetoing spending bills. But the White House has already all but conceded the emptiness of the pledge. By trumpeting the fact that the total surplus remains high, his aides implicitly suggest that it is pointless to treat the finances of one program as separate from those of the rest of the government. The president should not allow his priorities to be vanquished by an accounting fiction.

CULTURE WATCH

Legacy Admissions

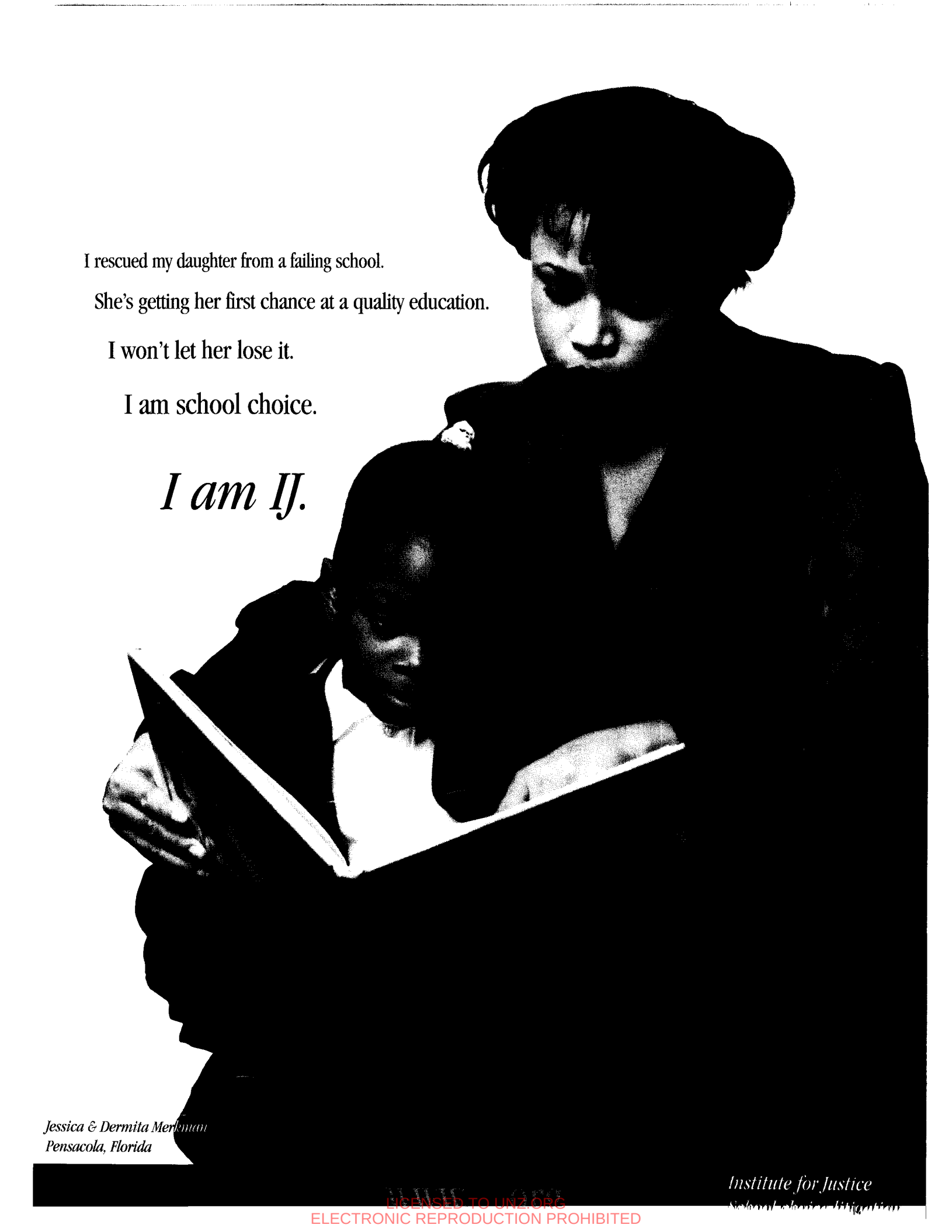
A CONTROVERSY over nomenclature at Yale University has spun into a broad discussion of America's national purpose, and the role of slavery, past and present.

The germ of the spat at Yale is the fact that one of its twelve residential colleges is named for a famous alumnus, John C. Calhoun (class of 1804). How could a modern liberal university enshrine the Cicero of the slave power? Upon examination, it turned out that most of the other 18th- and early 19th-century worthies who were namesakes of Yale's colleges—northerners all—had also owned slaves.

This embarrassing fact led back to others. All 13 colonies, and their successor states, north and south, permitted slavery. Even after slavery in the North ended, northern merchants and manufacturers were heavily invested in transporting and processing slaves and slave-picked crops.

David Brion Davis, one of the nation's premier historians of slavery, and director of the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition at Yale, published an essay in the *New York Times* tying the threads together, and arguing that America has only in recent decades emerged from an amnesiac period of ignoring “slavery's centrality” in its history. Kurt Schmoke, former mayor of Baltimore and a Yale trustee, then asked whether this centrality meant that America should now pay reparations to slaves' descendants (he thought not).

Universities, and people generally, should be mindful of history. That includes not overcorrecting. By focusing on pre-Civil War foreign policy, Davis can write that the “one” antislavery act taken by the early national government was John Adams's recognition of Haitian independence. At home, however, many restrictions were laid on slavery. In the founding period, seven states began the process of abolition;



I rescued my daughter from a failing school.

She's getting her first chance at a quality education.

I won't let her lose it.

I am school choice.

I am IJ.

Jessica & Dermita Merkleman
Pensacola, Florida

Institute for Justice
School choice litigation

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beginning with the Northwest Ordinances, more than half the territories of America, from Ohio to California, were ruled free. The founding document of the country, of course, had proclaimed that "all men are created equal"—a rhetorical advantage that slavery's opponents never surrendered.

Much American wealth rested on bondage: Davis writes that in 1860 there was more money tied up in slaves than in manufacturing or railroads. But that is like comparing the money invested in country houses and steam engines in England in 1800. The money of industry reaped the exponential dividends that made America wealthy.

Schmoke is right to be leery of reparations. By now equity is

too snarled to untangle. Does Colin Powell, whose parents came from Jamaica, deserve an American payment? Will Tiger Woods pay himself? Calculating divine equity, as Lincoln tried to do in his Second Inaugural, is even more audacious. If the Civil War was God's punishment on a nation that allowed slavery, was slavery itself a punishment for the sins of Africans?

Americans should know their past to know where they stand. But their guide to action should be to do justice to the people before them, to work hard, and to hope for the best. Happily the American system, purged of its original failings, gives work and hope maximum play.

■ NOTES & ASIDES ■

■ Memo to: NR Staff and Fans
From: WFB

What happened 25 years ago?

John Virtes came to NR to do research. He continues imperturbable, resourceful, genial. He knows everything, including who was there on the grassy knoll that fateful day! He will tell all on his 50th anniversary. He has our devoted thanks.

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: When someone dies at home without clear medical cause or sign of violence, the media often report that the person "died of an apparent heart attack." While I claim only minimal knowledge of cardiac catastrophes, I venture to wage that no one has ever died of an apparent heart attack.

Also, every time I'm on an airplane, the flight attendant asks us to turn off our portable electronic devices. Is it possible that people can get on a plane with electronic devices that are *not* portable?

Very apparently yours,
Richard H. Lucas
Missouri City, Tex.

Dear Mr. Lucas: And quite right. "Apparently died" of a heart attack is different, and accurate, since (I think) heart attacks don't look different whether apparent or not apparent.

And yes, indeed. The airlines

could easily handle the problem by instructing us to turn off "personal electronic devices."

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: Please forgive me if I led you to infer (Notes & Asides, June 25) that I thought such expressions as "between he and I" and "this state is a good place to live" have ever appeared in the pages of NATIONAL REVIEW. To my knowledge, they have not. Both, however, are today common usages in American English, spoken by people whose parents or grandparents would have been dumbfounded at hearing such utterances.

Please convey my fondest regards to Florence King and assure her that in this house The Misanthrope's Corner continues to be a welcome anodyne for living in a culture on the brink of full-blown psychosis.

Yours truly,
Russell McFadden
West Columbia, Tex.

Dear Mr. McFadden: Compliments relayed.

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: In your column "Watch the Killer Get Killed?" in the May 28 issue, you write the following: "The hanging was public, the spectators numerous . . ." This euphuistic construction, alas, dis-

plays both punctuative and syntactic blundering.

First, note the faulty punctuation. Even in elliptical structures, two sentences without coordination should be joined with a semicolon, not a comma.

Second, since the plural "spectators" cannot agree with the implied singular verb "was," the subject and verb here lack concordance.

A more glaring example of the same solecism crops up in John O'Sullivan's statement ("National Greatness Lite," June 25) that ". . . the main source for NCG's positive proposals were articles by David Brooks."

Let me suggest a properly punctuated revision with two singular subjects: "The hanging was public; the crowd, large." Observe that "crowd," unlike your "spectators," agrees with the understood "was."

Why do you prefer "was" with a plural subject?

Sincerely,
William A. Paton
El Paso, Tex.

Dear Mr. Paton: Nice poking around. I'd compromise with a comma after "spectators," but you can't have the semicolon. They were checked out, in cases like these, in junior English.

Cordially,

—WFB

A Surplus of Anxiety

What the numbers mean for Bush's hopes

BYRON YORK

THE morning after the Office of Management and Budget unveiled the administration's new—and dramatically lower—projections for the budget surplus, the White House communications office began holding daily strategy sessions aimed at winning the public-relations war with Democrats over the surplus, spending, and Social Security. The “huddle”—don't call it a “war room” or you'll be corrected by Bush aides—meets every morning at 9:30 to come up with talking points to send Republican allies on the Hill.

“Will the new budget numbers prevent the president from helping those who need health care?” asks one talking-point question. The answer: No. Another question: “Many say that the new budget numbers will prevent the president from funding a prescription drug benefit for seniors. Is this true?” The answer: No. A third question: “Many assert that the new budget numbers will prevent President Bush from funding his increases in military spending. Is this true?” Again: No.

Of course, Democrats are pounding out their own talking points—“George W. Bush has changed the tone in Washington, back to the days of budget gimmicks and rosy scenarios,” says chairman Terry McAuliffe in a special message from the DNC—and some Democrats are trying to figure out how to bash Bush for a tax cut they supported (and that would have reduced the surplus even more this year had they gotten the bigger rebate checks they wanted). But the spinning is just one part of a much bigger story that will consume Washington this fall, and that is the administration's bet-the-bank prediction that the economy will grow fast enough next year to sustain White House budget priorities. Virtually everything George Bush wants to do as president depends on it.

Budget chief Mitch Daniels said as



Bush budget man Mitch Daniels

much when he handed out the new surplus projections on August 22. “I would simply note that economic growth is the key to continuing this very strong fiscal picture,” Daniels told reporters. “We'll all be very watchful on economic trend data on which our surpluses, the trust funds of our entitlement programs, and all our hopes for continued meeting of the nation's priorities ultimately depend.”

Daniels's concern is well placed. Just look at what the latest economic numbers did to the budget predictions the White House made last April. At that time, the administration, assuming economic growth this year would be 2.4 percent, estimated the 2001 surplus at \$281 billion. Now, with economic growth assumed to be 1.7 percent, that number is predicted to be \$158 billion. Not all the difference came from the slowdown; the surplus was reduced by

\$40 billion because of the tax cut, \$28 billion because of a congressional decision to hold over some tax revenues until next year, and \$9 billion because of additional spending on defense, farm aid, and a few other things. But the largest single portion of the decline—\$46 billion—was the result of lower revenue projections owing to the economic slowdown. And if it turns out that 2001 economic growth is even less than 1.7 percent, the final surplus number could be smaller still.

The White House is predicting that the economy, stimulated by tax cuts, will grow at a 3.2 percent annual rate next year. “The tax rebate checks have just begun to go out. The first installment of rate relief is only just occurring,” Daniels said in an August 27 conference call with reporters. “The Fed has also acted aggressively. And many economists think that these are just the kind of changes necessary to jolt growth back solidly into the plus column.” Daniels said the administration's 3.2 percent forecast is in the “mainstream” of economic opinion, but he conceded that the Congressional Budget Office's lower forecast—for 2.6 percent growth—was just as reasonable.

But if the White House had based its projections on an estimate of 2.6 percent growth, the budget numbers wouldn't have added up. Now, since it has committed to the 3.2 percent growth rate for 2002, the administration has increased the chances it has overestimated the economy's actual strength. “If I'm the White House, both from a political and an economic point of view, I'm not going to project 3.2 percent,” says Steve Moore of the pro-tax-cut Club for Growth. “I would expect the worst and hope for the best, and they're expecting the best.”

Maybe the best will happen. But in the long run, it might be a good thing if it didn't, because a further reduced surplus might be necessary to restore a measure of sanity to an economic debate that is, even by Washington standards, simply crazy.

The White House and both parties in Congress are pretending to “protect” Social Security by not spending the Social Security surplus. But the Social Security system is perfectly healthy right now, and there is no way to put that sur-

Chris Kleponis

plus money in a savings account—the fabled “lockbox”—for the future, when the system will be in crisis. Instead, the extra cash is being used to pay down the national debt. So far, the White House and its allies in Congress have done a good job of explaining that there simply is no Social Security lockbox, that it was simply a turn of Al Gore’s rhetoric. But they have failed to go the next step, which is to ask: Why, if the government is running a \$158 billion surplus, has the administration vowed to set aside \$157 billion of it to pay down a debt that doesn’t particularly need repaying—especially in a time of economic downturn, when the money could be used for other things? Why pretend that a surplus of nearly \$160 billion is not really a surplus at all?

■

Bush could treat the Social Security surplus like the rest of the surplus: return it to the taxpayers or spend it.

■

Two reasons. The first is that the president pledged to “protect” Social Security and does not want to be seen as going back on his word. The second is that the strategy has some political value for the White House. By saying that it has come up with a budget that does not touch the Social Security surplus, the administration can blame profligate Democrats—and Republicans—if Congress dips into it to fund expensive spending programs. Bush will argue forcefully that the real solution is to reduce spending. “If we can’t find some savings in a \$2 trillion budget, then we’ve got a problem,” says an OMB official.

The trouble will come when the Social Security surplus is the only surplus there is (that’s already the case if you accept the Congressional Budget Office’s estimate). What will the White House do then? Most likely, it will break down and spend the Social Security surplus, just as was always done before the “save Social Security” mania took hold.

Already the president has begun to inch away from his pledge not to spend

the surplus. On August 24, he told reporters, “I’ve said that the only reason we should use Social Security funds is in case of an economic recession or war.” Normally, the definition of a recession is negative economic growth for two quarters in a row, but a few days later Mitch Daniels left room for a more elastic definition. “It’s been pretty conventional to leave an exception for economic distress,” he said. “And if you look back, some of those [exceptions] were not quite at the classical definition of a recession.” Which means that if the country experiences poor economic growth that nevertheless falls short of a recession, the president might use that as a reason to do what many observers believe he should do anyway: treat the Social Security surplus like the rest of the surplus, and either return it to the taxpayers or spend it (or some combination of the two).

Besides, in the long run, the administration’s growth estimates will probably be correct. Yes, Daniels may be wrong about the end of 2001, or all of 2002, for that matter. It’s hard to predict what will happen in any given year. But history and good economic analysis make it much easier to predict with some accuracy what will happen in the next ten years: The economy will grow, faster at times and slower at others, but at a pretty good clip overall. So when the president predicts that the economy will grow by an average of more than 3 percent a year for the next ten years, there’s a good chance he’s right.

But for the moment, everything depends on economic growth in the short term. If the economy jumps forward and grows at 4.2 percent next year, all is wonderful. If it struggles along and grows at 1.2 percent, that’s another story. The difference between the two, politically, will be staggering. “When Larry Kudlow and I predicted budget surpluses a few years ago, all we did was change the growth rate in the economy—just one variable,” recalls Steve Moore. “We said, ‘Look, the growth rate is not going to be 2.5 percent, it’s going to be 3.5 percent. And that changed everything. It turned a sea of red ink into a sea of black ink.’” Now, the biggest worry for George W. Bush is that the economy might do just the opposite. NR

■ THE NATION ■

The General Welfare

Consequences and lessons of reform

RAMESH PONNURU

ONLY one incident provoked any resignations of conscience from the Clinton administration, and it had nothing to do with the Lewinsky scandal. For liberals, President Clinton’s greatest dishonor was his signing of welfare reform on August 22, 1996. The *Washington Post* and *New York Times* ran outraged editorial after outraged editorial. Three of Clinton’s appointees resigned from the Department of Health and Human Services. One of them, Peter Edelman—whose wife, Marian Wright Edelman, had led the fight against the reform in her role as president of the Children’s Defense Fund—later wrote an article for *The Atlantic* calling welfare reform “The Worst Thing Bill Clinton Has Done.”

Now that five years have passed, one of Peter Edelman’s colleagues in resignation, Wendell Primus, has a different view. “In many ways welfare reform is working better than I thought it would. . . . The sky isn’t falling anymore. Whatever we have been doing over the last five years, we ought to keep going,” he told the *Times* in August.

What accounts for this astonishing reversal? An even more astonishing success. Welfare reform has worked about as well as any public policy ever does. Nobody expected the welfare rolls to drop by 8.5 million people. Yet that’s what happened from January 1994 to mid 2000. (The decline began before the reform bill was enacted, both because states were implementing their own reforms and because the culture was turning sharply against welfare dependency.) If critics had predicted such a rapid decline, they would have assumed it would be accomplished only by abandoning the poor to destitution and starvation.

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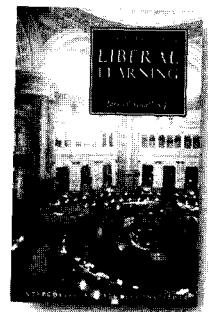
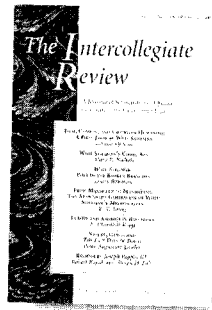
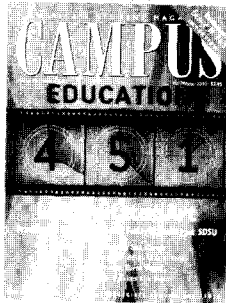
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As it was, the critics predicted that the reform would increase poverty. When he was in the Clinton administration, Primus commissioned an Urban Institute study that projected that the welfare-reform bill would push the families of 1 million children into poverty. For this reason, Ted Kennedy called the bill "legislative child abuse." Daniel Patrick Moynihan called reform "the most brutal act of social policy since Reconstruction" and predicted that there would be "a third of a million children in the streets."

Instead, poverty rates have fallen. The Census reports that the black child-poverty rate has dropped a third, from 43.8 percent in the mid '90s to 33.1 percent in 1999. That's the lowest rate in history. During the same period, the percentage of children of single mothers living in poverty has fallen from 44 to 35.7—also an all-time low. The Department of Agriculture reports that the number of children who are chronically hungry has dropped by nearly half.

The opponents of welfare reform said that no jobs would be available to people leaving the rolls. Most of them were said to be unemployable. But according to a recent paper by June O'Neill and Anne Hill for the Manhattan Institute, it is precisely the groups considered the least employable who are joining the work force at the fastest rate. Employment of never-married mothers is up 50 percent since 1992. For young single mothers (between the ages of 18 and 24), it's up 58 percent. For single mothers who are high-school dropouts, it's up 61 percent.

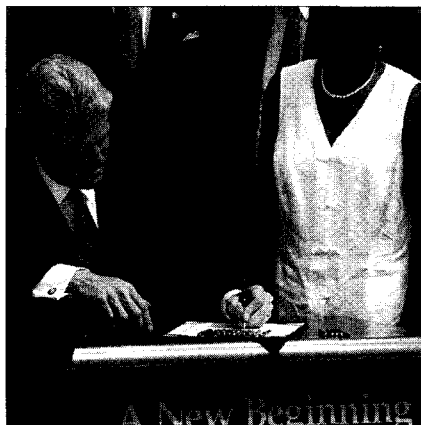
Perhaps the most surprising post-reform trend has been that the illegitimacy ratio has stopped rising. For 30 years, it had risen relentlessly. Every year, it ticked up another point. Now it appears to have stabilized, albeit at a high level (about one-third of babies are born to unmarried women).

The welfare-reform law does not do much to combat illegitimacy directly. All it does is fund abstinence education and provide some money to states that reduce their out-of-wedlock birthrates. But requiring single mothers to work may indirectly have discouraged them from bearing children out of wedlock. The anti-illegitimacy rhetoric that suffused the welfare-reform debate may also have changed the culture somewhat.

It is worth noting that the decline in

illegitimacy occurred in tandem with a decline in abortion. One reason the law did not attack illegitimacy directly is that a strange-bedfellows coalition of pro-lifers and abortion-rights activists successfully fought off measures to do so. They argued that if benefits for single mothers were cut, they would be forced to get abortions. But to the extent welfare reform discouraged illegitimacy, it does not appear to have done so by encouraging abortion.

Liberals who remain skeptical of welfare reform cannot deny all the good things that have happened since reform was passed; but they insist that it is just a coincidence, that the real engine of progress has been the astonishingly robust economy of the late 1990s. That theory may sound plausible, but in the past, economic growth has not reduced the welfare rolls. The number of people on



Clinton signs welfare reform in 1996

welfare increased during the booms of the '60s and the '80s. The paper by O'Neill and Hill uses a regression analysis to try to see how much of the caseload decline should be attributed to reform, how much to the economy. They conclude that reform was responsible for more than half of the improvement, while the economy accounted for less than 20 percent.

Because welfare reform passed and succeeded, it is quickly becoming uncontroversial among politicians. As a result, we tend to forget what a close-run thing it was. Half of the Democrats in the House and the Senate voted against it, including the Democratic leadership. If the Democrats had kept Congress in 1994, welfare reform would have taken a very different form, if it had passed at all. If Republicans had chosen to keep welfare alive as a political issue rather than enact a law—by sending Clinton a bill he would have felt

obliged to veto, for example—the opportunity would have slipped away. Ron Haskins, who was a key aide to the House Republicans, says, "I still get up in the morning and say, 'Damn, I can't believe we passed that thing.'"

The success of welfare reform suggests a few lessons that may have application to other policy disputes:

- Governors, far from being bold reformers, are often defenders of the status quo. The nation's governors are often depicted in rosy hues: While legislators in Washington bicker unproductively, the governors roll up their sleeves and get things done. But the governors, by and large, did not make welfare recipients work. (Tommy Thompson in Wisconsin was a notable exception.) The National Governors Association lobbied to keep work-requirement and anti-illegitimacy provisions out of the welfare-reform bill. They wanted federal money with no strings attached, or at least no strings that their bureaucracies disliked. The policy that worked—work requirements—had to be imposed from Washington.

- Changing policies that substantially affect millions of people—even very destructive policies—takes time. It took decades of conservative railing against the futility and immorality of the welfare system to make any headway. Laying the groundwork was critical. Ronald Reagan tried to impose work requirements and failed. The 1988 welfare-reform bill paid the idea lip service but didn't really make anyone work. Bill Clinton's end-welfare-as-we-know-it rhetoric was a cover for more of the same. But the 1988 bill and Clinton's rhetoric changed the politics of reform for the better: Liberals were no longer calling work requirements a form of slavery. Once work requirements were considered uncontroversial, conservatives were poised to win the argument for real work requirements. By the mid '90s, conservative assumptions were so firmly entrenched that even Edelman wrote, in the first words of his piece in *The Atlantic*, "I hate welfare," i.e., the system that existed before reform.

Conservatives eager to transform Social Security should keep in mind this history. Reform of that program isn't likely to happen next year. But even if the law doesn't change, it doesn't mean that the administration's efforts will have been for naught.

War in the Middle East

Can it happen? How can it be avoided?

The Arab uprising in Israel, the "Al Aksa Intifada", has now been going on since September of last year. Hundreds have died and thousands have been wounded. What is happening has all the earmarks of a civil war. But it isn't just the Palestinians that Israel is confronted with. All of the Arab world and Iran are backing the Palestinians and are goading them on. Any spark could trigger a full-fledged war -- which, in all likelihood, would result in all of the Arab states and Iran lined up against Israel.

What are the facts?

Israeli forbearance. Under the guidance of former president Clinton, and in order to put an end to the long struggle with the Palestinians, former Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak made breakthrough offers to Yasser Arafat -- he offered him the moon, "concessions" that would not have been conceivable at any time before. But Arafat, primarily interested in "armed struggle," rejected those unprecedented offers out of hand, and instead instructed his people to engage Israel in violent conflict. Israel, in the face of this violence, has shown remarkable restraint, despite our Secretary of State's unbelievable remark that Israel was using "excessive force." "Excessive force"? What would we Americans do if, say, Mexican insurgents, with the support of their government, lobbed mortar rounds into San Diego

or El Paso, or dispatched suicide bombers into our major cities causing hundreds of casualties? You know the answer!

The last time America faced a threat from a neighboring nation was in 1916, when an incursion by Pancho Villa killed seventeen Americans. The U.S. promptly sent an army of 6,000 men into Mexico to capture Villa. Can Israel be expected to be patient with Arafat much longer, before he is subjected to the treatment meted out to Pancho Villa?

The sham of the Oslo Agreement. Even the most sanguine can no longer doubt that the heralded "Oslo Peace Process," sealed by a handshake between the late Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat, is one of the great failures of recent world history. And it failed because the Palestinians, under the leadership of Yasser Arafat, have broken virtually

every clause of the Oslo Accord -- from forming a standing army of at least 45,000 men, to smuggling heavy weapons into their arsenals, to releasing and failing to arrest terrorists who have committed murderous outrages against innocent Israeli citizens. And the Palestinians are not at all interested in a Palestinian state alongside Israel. They are only interested in a Palestinian state instead and in place of Israel -- Palestine, as they put it, "from the River to the Sea." That goal, at least for now, cannot be attained by conventional military means. So the strategy is to attempt to destroy Israel by a low-level war of attrition, by insisting on the

"right of return" of the (by now swollen to almost four million) "refugees," and (the great hope) by ultimately sparking a general war, in which the Arabs and the Iranians would finally be able to drive the hated Jews into the

sea and into final oblivion -- the same goal with which Abdel Nasser of Egypt provoked the 1967 Six-Day War.

How can such an outcome, such a war, be prevented? For the longest time, Israel has tried to appease the Arabs and also "world opinion," which is almost totally critical of Israel. Israel has voluntarily withdrawn from Lebanon and has turned virtually all of the Gaza Strip and most of the "West Bank" over to the Palestinians. But the Palestinians, and it seems the entire Arab world, see these accommodations by Israel, these endless concessions, not for what they are meant to be, namely way stations on the road to final peace, but as indecision, loss of will, and weakness. Smelling blood, the Arabs, just as Nasser did in 1967, are dreaming of a final assault against a weak and demoralized Israel.

Accommodations and concessions did not work and they will not work in promoting peace. On the contrary, Israel's perceived weakness will goad the Arabs into embarking on full-scale war. In order to avoid such a war, Israel needs to reassume its previous stance of deterrence. Specifically, Ariel Sharon, whom the Israeli people chose for his proven strength and decisiveness, should initiate policies by which, among other actions, suicide bombers would be buried in potter's fields, rather than being returned to their relatives, who turn their funerals into frenzied demonstrations; freeze the financial assets of the Palestinian Authority, of Arafat, and of the PLO; prevent P.A. officials (including Arafat) from returning to the territory now controlled by the P.A.; permit no transportation of people or goods beyond basic necessities; shut off utilities to the P.A. Then he should implement the death penalty against murderers and seize weapons from the P.A., making sure that no more weapons reach it. He should reoccupy areas from which gunfire or missiles are shot; seize the P.A.'s illegal offices in Jerusalem and its infrastructure and villages from which attacks are launched; capture or otherwise dispose of P.A. leadership. The stakes are high, but the road is clear. Unless Israel takes steps to deter its enemies, and unless it reasserts its position of strength, today's intifada, today's war of attrition with the Palestinians, is going to lead to full-scale war in the region.

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■ A policy intended to promote deeply felt values is unlikely to be abandoned simply because of its cost. Many voters sympathized with conservative complaints about the cost of welfare. But those complaints also made conservatives look too uncaring to be trusted to reform the program. Only when conservatives shifted their focus to how welfare hurt the very people it was intended to help—trapping them in a cycle of dysfunction and dependence—did they succeed. Similarly, conservatives are unlikely to achieve progress on environmental policy until they get people to see not only that regulations are burdensome but that they are often not the best way to protect nature.

A case could be made that the success of welfare reform hurt conservatives. By accomplishing some of their goals, they lost one of their most powerful issues. Welfare was both unpopular in itself and discrediting of government activism in general. Neo-liberal journalist Mickey Kaus—himself a tireless advocate of welfare reform—argues that welfare reform was a prerequisite for a revival of liberalism.

And so it may be. But it is possible for conservatives to take a more hopeful view. Welfare may have symbolized everything objectionable about big-government liberalism; but it also symbolized everything intractable about it. The success of welfare reform demonstrates that failed liberal policies, and the destructive liberal social trends to which they are linked, need not be passively accepted as inevitable features of modern life. Some of those policies, and those trends, can be reversed.

That fact has implications for the future of welfare reform—which should by no means be over. The Bush administration believes that the next step of reform should be to let small, and often religious, groups provide benefits to the poor. But at best this policy will improve the efficiency with which government does the same old things. A bolder step would be to revisit those policies that discourage marriage and encourage illegitimacy, while launching a rhetorical campaign for stable two-parent families.

A lot of clever people will say that this effort could never work. But that's what they said about welfare reform, too. **NR**

■ PUBLIC POLICY ■

A Crashing Failure

The stupid tragedy
of CAFE

SAM KAZMAN

If the National Academy of Sciences discovered that a certain chemical was killing several dozen people a year, congressmen would rush to ban the substance. But in late July, the Academy found that a federal policy was causing thousands of deaths—and now congressmen are scrambling not to end the policy, but to *expand* it.

The deadly policy in question is the federal government's new-car fuel-economy program, enacted in 1975 to reduce our dependence on foreign oil. Popularly known as CAFE (corporate average fuel economy), it requires the Transportation Department to set mile-per-gallon standards. The passenger-car standard is currently 27.5 mpg, while the light-truck standard, which covers SUVs, is 20.7 mpg. A Republican proposal to make the standards slightly more stringent passed the House on August 1, and the Democratic Senate may push for a far greater expansion after Labor Day.

The real question is why anyone wants to expand CAFE at all. Two days before the House debate, a panel of the National Academy of Sciences issued a long-awaited report, which concluded that CAFE had contributed to between 1,300 and 2,600 traffic deaths in a single year, as well as ten times that many serious injuries. Since CAFE has been in full force for over a decade, its cumulative human toll is probably in the tens of thousands.

By making cars smaller, CAFE has

Mr. Kazman is general counsel of the Competitive Enterprise Institute, a Washington-based free-market advocacy group.

made them more dangerous. Larger, heavier cars are less fuel-efficient than similarly equipped smaller, lighter cars, but they're also safer. Research demonstrates that this holds true in practically every type of accident. Larger cars have more mass to absorb crash forces, and more interior space in which their occupants can "ride down" a collision before striking a dashboard or side pillar. For this reason, the smallest cars have "occupant death rates" more than twice as great as those of large cars.

Critics of CAFE have been raising this issue for years. A 1989 Brookings-Harvard study estimated that CAFE caused a 14 to 27 percent increase in occupant fatalities—an annual toll of 2,200 to 3,900 deaths. A 1999 *USA Today* analysis concluded that, over its lifetime, CAFE had resulted in 46,000 fatalities. These findings are in the same ballpark as those of the Academy. CAFE's advocates, however, have uniformly claimed that CAFE isn't a factor in any deaths at all. A Sierra Club

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**CAFE has been in full force
for over a decade . . . its
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■

brochure epitomizes this view, asking: "Can we improve fuel economy without sacrificing safety?" Its answer: "Absolutely. Long time safety advocates such as the Center for Auto Safety and Ralph Nader support increasing CAFE to 45 mpg and point out that we can do so safely."

But Nader took a very different view back when large cars weren't as politically incorrect as they are now. In a 1989 interview on what type of car he'd buy, Nader said, "Well, larger cars are safer—there is more bulk to protect the occupant. But they are less fuel-efficient." Asked which cars are least safe, Nader replied: "The tiny ones." Clarence Ditlow's Center for Auto Safety took the same position. In 1972 it published a detailed critique of the Beetle, entitled *Small on Safety—The Designed-in Dangers of the Volkswagen*. Page after page

the main reasons these light cars exist in the first place.

CAFE's proponents argue that new technologies can raise fuel economy without further reducing the size of cars. They may be right, but CAFE will continue to constrain car weight regardless: No matter what fuel-saving technologies we put into the car of the future, adding weight to that car will both lower its fuel efficiency and increase its safety. The trade-off between these two factors will always remain. Dr. Leonard Evans, a renowned safety researcher and president of the International Traffic Medicine Association, says the CAFE proponents' argument is like "a tobacco executive claiming that smoking isn't risky because exercise and good diet can make smokers healthier."

Pro-CAFE-ers cite polls that supposedly demonstrate overwhelming public support for higher standards, but those polls don't mention the safety issue and the public itself knows little about it.

■
**Adding weight to a car will
both lower its fuel efficiency
and increase its safety.
That's the trade-off.**
■

The Competitive Enterprise Institute's polling, on the other hand, indicates that once the public learns of CAFE's actual death toll, only 19 percent still favor it.

In 1990, on the eve of the Gulf War, a coalition of CAFE advocates—including Ben & Jerry's and Paul Newman—ran full-page newspaper ads claiming that a 3-mpg increase in the standards would make war unnecessary. "The price of gasoline," they intoned, "should never be a reason to send our sons and daughters off to die in a foreign war." That is correct, but at least in the Gulf War we knew that lives were being put at risk. CAFE advocates, on the other hand, have never admitted that their policy poses any risks whatsoever. The sad truth is that when it comes to blood-for-oil campaigns, CAFE ranks with the worst of them. **NR**

■ PUBLIC POLICY II ■

The Power of Two

A noble minority on
the Civil Rights Commission

JOHN J. MILLER

IN August, when Al Sharpton talked about why he wants to embark on a fantasy campaign for president, he made sure to mention "voter disenfranchisement" in Florida in last year's election. Just about every other Democrat can be expected to do the same between now and 2004. Reverend Al repeated the term like a mantra in a round of interviews, and nodding scribes on the Sharpton beat have buttressed his point with dutiful assertions that blacks were nine times as likely as whites to have their ballots invalidated.

That startling figure promises to become a piece of conventional wisdom, a permanent part of the Florida story that forever questions the legitimacy of President Bush's election; but it's almost certainly false. The only reason it has any currency at all is that the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights concocted it. To ensure that it would stick, the commission even engaged in a little disenfranchisement of its own, suppressing the voices of two GOP-appointed commissioners who hold a different view.

If a group of conservatives had done to liberals what this commission's liberals have done to Abigail Thernstrom and Russell Redenbaugh, the *Washington Post* would be splashing the details on its front page and the *New York Times* would be editorializing against right-wing repression. This particular episode, however, has attracted scant attention. That's a shame, because it's a fascinating story that shows how far some so-called civil-rights activists will go in advancing a political agenda.

Fairness, of course, was too much to expect from the commission; its chairman, Mary Frances Berry, had been on an

anti-Bush crusade all along (see my article "A Threat to Our Domestic Institutions" in the April 2 NR). Her determination to undermine the current administration was on full display in her bombastic report, which accused Florida officials of "a pattern and practice of injustice, ineptitude, and inefficiency." Despite these strong words and many others like them, the report failed to authenticate a single case of actual voter discrimination. It contained plenty of anecdotes of dubious merit, plus a statistical analysis of ballot-rejection rates by Allan J. Lichtman, an American University professor who has done consulting work for Al Gore. It was Lichtman's claim that blacks were nine times as likely as whites to have cast invalid ballots.

Before the commission can issue a report, the individual commissioners must vote to approve it. They don't actually write the report themselves; a large staff compiles it, under the direction of the chairman. Drafts are supposed to circulate before a vote, giving commissioners a chance to review the staff's product. In the case of the 200-page Florida report, however, Thernstrom and Redenbaugh didn't receive their copies until three days before the vote—and one day after it had been leaked to handpicked reporters for the purpose of creating positive spin. This stunt would be bad enough under normal circumstances, but it was particularly cruel with regard to Redenbaugh, who is blind and has an assistant read commission documents to him. (He must have grimaced when he heard the report's line about the necessity of "not discriminat[ing] against blind or visually impaired individuals.")

On June 8, the commission voted 6-2 to adopt the report. Thernstrom and Redenbaugh were the minority, and began to prepare a dissent. This is standard procedure at the commission: Members who don't agree with a report's conclusions are allowed to write dissents, which the commission then publishes as part of the official report. That's how it has worked for as long as anyone can remember, and that's how Thernstrom and Redenbaugh expected it to work this time.

They pored over the document for nearly three weeks and prepared a thorough rebuttal. The commission was

uncooperative, refusing to provide them with the machine-readable data and regression tables Lichtman had used in making his calculations. It is customary for scholars to share this type of information—so that they can verify each other's work—but the commission chose to stonewall. "There is no disk, nor was there ever any disk or disks, of Professor Lichtman's data," wrote commission staff director Les Jin in a memo. This was tantamount to saying that the commission's statistical analysis was based on statistics that never existed. Thernstrom and Redenbaugh wound up spending days compiling their own data, even though they could not be sure it was the same information the elusive Lichtman had used. They received assistance from Thernstrom's husband, Stephan, a Harvard historian who pioneered the use of statistics in his own profession, and from John Lott of Yale Law School, who was conducting his own investigation into the Florida voting controversy.

The Thernstrom-Redenbaugh dissent was ready at the end of June. It ran about 60 pages and didn't mince words: The majority report's central claims had "little basis in fact," and the report itself was "a dangerous and divisive document." The dissent was an almost point-by-point refutation of the commission's work. Along the way, Thernstrom and Redenbaugh made fresh contributions to our common understanding of what happened in Florida: They showed, for example, that the incidence of ballot spoilage increased in counties whose election supervisors were Democrats, and rose even further in counties where that Democratic official was black. This datum ought to make the paranoid notion of Jeb Bush's masterminding a racist conspiracy look preposterous, even to those predisposed to believe it. Thernstrom and Redenbaugh also showed that while some predominantly black precincts saw high rates of ballot spoilage, factors such as literacy and voting experience were more useful in explaining the disparity—to the point where race qua race may not have played any role at all.

Berry had not even read the dissent when she issued a verdict. "It is a lie," she said during Senate testimony on June 27. At the commission's next meeting, on July 13, vice chairman Cruz Reynoso

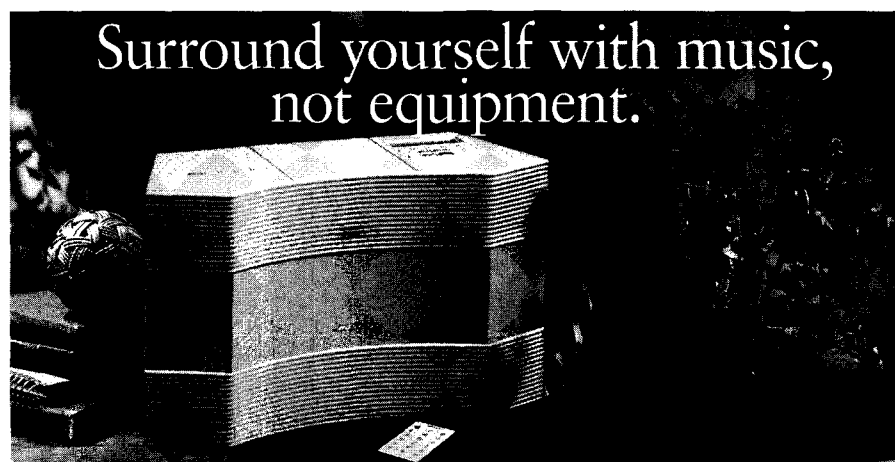


Abigail Thernstrom by Ismael Roldan

broadened the analysis: "I find this dissent insulting to me personally. . . . I find it unprofessional in tone and replete with falsehoods." Neither Berry nor Reynoso ever explained where, exactly, these lies and falsehoods were to be found. Instead,

they sought to quash the dissent in its entirety. First Reynoso suggested that the commission simply vote not to attach the dissent to the final report. Berry, however, understood the hazard of a full frontal assault. "They will characterize it as suppressing their freedom of expression," she said, "even if it were a lie." So the commission swerved in a different direction. "This report is illegal," declared Reynoso, because it relied on the uncompensated assistance of Stephan Thernstrom and John Lott. The commission ordered Thernstrom and Redenbaugh to work with the panel's general counsel, Edward A. Hailes, to hash out the issues.

A law prevents the commission from accepting work it doesn't pay for, except in limited circumstances. Berry, Hailes, and their allies insisted that this rule blocks individual commissioners from collaborating with scholars who volunteer their time. This had not always been their view: In 1988, Berry wrote a dissent citing "materials prepared by Professor Amado Cabezas of the University of California at Berkeley." There is no evidence that Cabezas was paid for his efforts. But that was then and this is



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now—and the imperative of now, from the perspective of the commission's liberals, was to silence Thernstrom and Redenbaugh.

On July 20—it was a Friday, and nearly 7:00 P.M.—Thernstrom was stunned to receive a fax from the commission's offices: "You did not participate in the meeting General Counsel Hailes had yesterday with Commissioner Redenbaugh. . . . The deadline has passed." Thernstrom had not heard about any meeting, and nobody had ever said anything about a deadline. She called Redenbaugh. He confirmed that there had been no "meeting." Rather, there had been a phone conversation lasting a few minutes, in which he and Hailes exchanged views in preparation (Redenbaugh thought) for a fuller discussion later. The business about the "deadline" was simply made up—it had not been discussed at the commission meeting. (Berry herself had said, "We would like these discussions to go forward some time in the next week, if possible, to at least begin the discussion.")

Thernstrom and Redenbaugh were told to resubmit a dissent stripped of all the contributions made by others, but they refused to bowdlerize their text. The commission then posted the whole Florida report on its webpage, including a section entitled "Dissenting Statement." Yet no words written by Thernstrom and Redenbaugh appeared in that space—just an anonymous explanation of why there was no dissent. The document the minority had submitted was an "illegality." Moreover, the dissenting commissioners "did not avail themselves of the opportunity" to turn their illegal opinions into legal ones.

The good news is that the Thernstrom-Redenbaugh dissent has seen the light of day: Both NATIONAL REVIEW and the Manhattan Institute posted it on their websites as the controversy unfolded. The American Enterprise Institute also plans to publish the dissent this fall. Yet it's amazing how this whole story—a gift-wrapped package for reporters sniffing around for little scandals—received nary a word elsewhere. But there's still time: Berry's top objective for the commission's September meeting is to rewrite the rules governing dissents, no doubt to bestow a retroactive blessing on what can only be described as censorship. **NR**

■ CULTURE WATCH ■

Black QBs, QED

The end of an NFL myth

STEVE CHAPMAN

MICHAEL VICK is an extraordinary success story. During two seasons as quarterback for Virginia Tech, he completed only 177 passes—a puny number next to Florida State star and Heisman Trophy winner Chris Weinke, who connected 650 times during his time in Tallahassee. But Vick's youth and modest experience didn't matter—his multifaceted talent was enough to make pro football scouts salivate. When the NFL draft began on April 21, Vick was the first pick. A couple of weeks later, still too young to buy a beer, he signed a six-year deal with the Atlanta Falcons paying him \$62 million—the richest rookie contract in the history of the league.

So what did *New York Times* football writer Mike Freeman have to say about this? He reached the same conclusion he always reaches when the subject of black NFL quarterbacks comes up: They never get a truly fair shake. "No matter how big a star you become," he informed Vick, "some people will always view you as a black man first and a quarterback second." In this he is in perfect accord with another *Times* football writer, Thomas George. Last season, after the Philadelphia Eagles' Donovan McNabb ran for more yards in a game than any other quarterback in 28 years, George worried that he would be dismissed as just another brother who can't pass—"because of pro football's meager history of blacks playing the position and because of the penchant of so many people to pigeonhole them."

If anyone still doubts the ability of black athletes to handle football's most

glamorous and pressure-packed job, it's not NFL coaches. In the 1999 draft, the first eleven picks included three black quarterbacks. Last year, eight blacks started at least one game for the league's 31 teams. Some are standouts, including McNabb, Minnesota's Daunte Culpepper, and Tennessee's Steve McNair, who in 2000 became only the second black QB to start in a Super Bowl. But blacks don't have to excel to keep drawing a paycheck. Among those who took snaps last year were over-the-hill stars like Warren Moon and Randall Cunningham, run-of-the-mill veterans like Jeff Blake, and unproven youngsters like Michael Bishop and Jarious Jackson. This is the golden age of the black quarterback, a category that barely existed in the NFL a few decades ago. But the myth endures that white owners, coaches, and fans still harbor a prejudice against any black who presumes to play the position. Black players, we are told, still suffer from the hoary stereotype that they lack what it takes to do the job.

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The numbers suggest that such attitudes are dead, and so does all the other evidence. Sentiment, after all, doesn't count for much in the NFL. Trent Dilfer, a white QB, guided the Baltimore Ravens to a lopsided Super Bowl triumph last season, but the Ravens dumped him as soon as the champagne bottles were empty. Not until August did he manage to land a roster spot—in Seattle, backing up a guy who has never started a game. (Imagine what the *New York Times* would make of that if Dilfer were black.) Troy Aikman turned the Dallas Cowboys into one of the most successful teams of the last 20 years, but when the concussion-prone 34-year-old asked to suit up for one more season, the team showed him the door. Ryan Leaf, picked second in the 1998 draft by San Diego, was discarded as a hopeless brat after just three seasons. While Vick was

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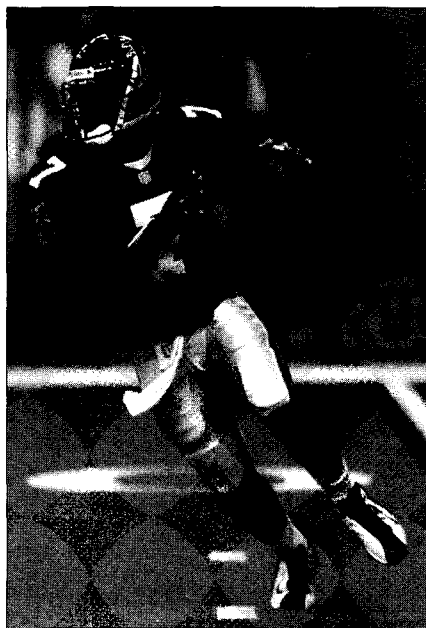
going first in the draft, Weinke, who delivered one national championship to Florida State and just missed getting a second, had to wait until the 106th pick to find out where he'd be going.

Clearly, what teams look for is players who can produce on the field—regardless of looks, charm, family connections, church attendance, or other extraneous characteristics. When training camp opened this year, 25 of the league's 31 teams had new quarterbacks on their rosters. The only reason we haven't seen a pronghorn sheep line up under center is that no team has found one that can hit on a fade route.

It's not hard to understand the league's brutal single-mindedness. The NFL is relentlessly competitive, and when coaches and general managers get fired, it's almost always for the sin of losing. None of them worries about forfeiting his job because he won with a dark-complexioned passer. Nor do fans seem to care much about the color that success (or failure) comes in.

McNabb, booed by disgruntled fans when the Eagles drafted him—they were hoping for (black) running back and Heisman Trophy winner Ricky Williams—is now the toast of Philly for his gaudy exploits on the field. Culpepper has made Vikings fans forget that Fran Tarkenton ever did anything but shill for lending companies on cable TV. To replace the legendary golden boy Aikman, Dallas signed Tony Banks—who is black and who last year, at Baltimore, got beat out by the unemployable Dilfer. When Banks disappointed in training camp, the Cowboys cut him and turned the helm over to rookie Quincy Carter, who is also black (as is his backup, Anthony Wright). If the perennially hapless Cincinnati Bengals are thinking of pulling the plug on black quarterback Akili Smith, to whom they gave a \$10.8 million signing bonus two years ago, it has nothing to do with his race and everything to do with his chronic inability to hit receivers or win games. "Of the 34 quarterbacks who have been top 10 draft choices since 1970," reports *Sports Illustrated*, "only three have had a lower completion percentage [than Smith] in their first two years."

Nitpickers may say that blacks are "underrepresented" at quarterback,



Atlanta's Michael Vick

since some 73 percent of all NFL players are black. But black punters are far rarer than black quarterbacks. What deep-rooted racial stereotype could explain that? That the mental demands of the job are perceived as too formidable for

blacks? If a racial disparity proves discrimination, white cornerbacks should be filing Title VII lawsuits. They are nearly unemployable in pro football, even though blue-eyed Caucasians somehow manage to perform adequately at other positions. Yet no one blames racial prejudice for their absence.

In some quarters, it's considered naïve to acknowledge racial progress. But when you look at the faces on NFL sidelines every week, it is plainly ludicrous to think racism is depriving black quarterbacks of the chance to show what they can do. The ruthlessly meritocratic pressures of professional football have turned a sport that was once overwhelmingly white into a fully integrated endeavor, and the meritocracy doesn't suddenly stop functioning when it comes to the most important position on the roster. Once upon a time, blacks were regarded as inadequate to that job. But these days, in the eyes of the people who do the hiring and firing in the NFL, there are no white quarterbacks or black quarterbacks. There are just good ones and bad ones.

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Evil Empire

The Communist 'hot, smart book of the moment'

DAVID PRYCE-JONES

THE making of a bestseller is a most uncertain art. It has to do with novelty or fashion, and the manipulation of the media. Suddenly some book is on everyone's lips, and we all hurry to the stores or the Internet for a copy. The herd instinct rarely fails. And here comes *Empire*. For no obvious reason, the *New York Times* burbles that this is the Next Big Idea, that it is "sending frissons of excitement through campuses from Sao Paulo to Tokyo," and throws open its op-ed page to the authors. *Time* magazine blesses it as "the hot, smart book of the moment." Whatever is going on? For this is no run-of-the-mill kind of bestseller, but a political manifesto with the aim of laying out a new guise for Communism, in other words modernizing the Last Big Idea Which Did Not Come Off, and whose frissons had an effect far beyond campus excitement.

Of course it comes as no surprise that the capitalist press should fictionalize the nature of Communism. It's often been like that at the *New York Times* since the Pulitzer Prize winner Walter Duranty assured readers that there was no famine or terror while millions were dying around him, and since *Time* magazine published a fulsome eulogy of Stalin when he died. It comes as no surprise either that Harvard University Press should be marketing this book. It is selling well, and that is a justification which overrides tiresome little scruples about morality, is it not? Nevertheless it might be well to recall Lenin's comment about the rope.

One frisson-inducing feature about *Empire* is its leading author, Antonio Negri. He brings with him the glamour of murder, and there's nothing much more alluring than that to the liberal media. He comes straight out of the events of 1968, a composite of that era when Che Guevara and Rudi Dutschke and stone-throwing students in Paris and elsewhere enchanted so many commentators round the world. Outwardly, he was a professor at the University of Padua, in the Faculty of Political Science. Secretly he was the brains behind the Red Brigades, the head of Workers' Autonomy, its political wing—the Italian state believes that he was also head of its armed wing. Workers' Autonomy was a shorthand term encapsulating his lifelong theory that after the revolution and the destruction of the capitalist state we would all be liber-

ated from institutions and so free to live happily ever after.

Political violence scarred the Seventies. The Red Brigades were the Italian equivalent of the Weathermen, the IRA in Ireland, Tupamaros in Uruguay, Direct Action in France, and the Baader-Meinhof Gang in West Germany. These and other groups were minuscule in size, involving only a few dozen members. They saw themselves as successors to the Bolsheviks of 1917, overthrowing capitalism in the democracies through terror. Yet again, the ends justified the means. In one atrocity after another, in one country after another, hundreds of innocent

bystanders, ordinary citizens, businessmen, policemen, politicians, American soldiers and officials, were brutally kidnapped and killed. Still today, Palestinian and Basque and Irish and Greek groups are in the grip of the murderous self-indulgence generated by the events of 1968. Negri has not outgrown it either. Apology is not for him.

Things were not quite as simple as they appeared, however. At the time, Claire Sterling, a courageous investigative journalist with contacts to several intelligence services, published her book *The Terror Network* to expose that the Soviet Union was arming and financing these groups, providing training and safe houses in East Germany, Czechoslovakia, or some other proxy. She was reviled almost universally as

a crazed conspiracy theorist, but it was the truth, thoroughly substantiated by now. In its heyday in the Seventies, Brezhnev's Soviet Union was still expanding all over the world, and Moscow took its chance to destabilize the West that stood in its way. The subversion proved eminently successful, especially in Italy and West Germany, where the Red Brigades and the Baader-Meinhof Gang panicked the governments. For historical reasons they were afraid of being labeled fascist if they used strong-arm measures, and so were unable to decide how to defend themselves. Momentarily, the rather precarious democratic structure of these states wavered.

In the end, the extremism of these groups completely alienated public opinion. The turning point arrived in Germany with the Entebbe hijacking, during which Germans were once again seen separating Jews from others and lining them up to be killed. In Italy, the kidnapping and cold-blooded murder of prime minister Aldo Moro was an outrage too savage to be



Antonio Negri in Rome

AFP/Elia Vergati

shrugged off. The Italian authorities had no doubt that Negri was ultimately responsible. Just before Moro was shot dead, someone telephoned his distraught wife to taunt her, and that person was identified at the time as Negri. Turning themselves in, repentant Red Brigaders confessed the crimes of the group and revealed its membership. In a huge crackdown in 1979 Negri was arrested and charged with "armed insurrection against the state," as well as 17 murders, including Moro's. The nationwide shock that an academic could have had such a career lingers into the present.

'COMMUNISTS LIKE US'

Justice in Italy is a matter of negotiation and networking. Thoroughly politicized, the judiciary is open to doing favors. For unclear reasons, Negri was imprisoned for four years without being brought to trial. During this time, he wrote five books. In a neat trick, he got himself elected in 1983 to parliament for the Radical party, composed mostly of Communists, whether reconstructed or not. Claiming parliamentary immunity, he was released from prison. The day before the Chamber of Deputies was to vote to remove his immunity, he fled to Paris. There he continued as before, writing books with titles such as *Communists Like Us* and *The Politics of Subversion*, teaching at one of the campuses of the University of Paris, and carrying out research for agencies of the French government, no less. There too he came to know the fashionable intellectuals, his peers like Michel Foucault and Jacques Lacan and Jacques Derrida, who were occupied in updating old-fashioned Marxism-Leninism with their brand-new lingo of deconstruction and post-structuralism. Negri was a quick learner of everything they had to teach.

In absentia Negri was sentenced to thirty years. This was open to negotiation in the manner of Italian justice, and invisible to the public. Voluntarily he returned to Italy in 1997, to be handed a sentence now reduced to 13 years for "membership in an armed band." Taking into account his previous years in prison, he was released almost at once into house arrest, and at present the sole restriction on him is a curfew which confines him to his pleasant Rome apartment from 7 P.M. to 7 A.M. The Italian virtue of tolerance merges indistinguishably into the vice of blind indifference. Today Negri is in his sixties, and visiting journalists and academics besiege him. Ecstatic interviews in the mainstream press everywhere praise his intelligence, his playful wit, and the warmth in his eyes, never questioning exactly how much responsibility he bears for Red Brigade terror. In small-circulation left-wing magazines he is presented as thinker and hero, a prospective Lenin for our day.

Among former pupils and admirers is Michael Hardt, co-author of *Empire*, and a spade-worker too, as Negri's English is less than perfect. In his early forties, Hardt is an associate professor at Duke University, where he teaches courses in—you'll never guess—Marxism. The message of our two authors is simple, and almost nostalgically old-hat. Capitalism stinks, it has got to go, and it soon will. The class struggle is still the basis of everything. The class struggle brought down the colonial empires which were based on exploitation. In the search for the profits they must have, capitalists have created a world market far beyond any state boundaries, and in capitalist eyes this globalization is marvelously cunning, the new "Empire," which is on

the Internet and in the ether, everywhere and nowhere, and therefore uncrackable.

On the contrary, according to our authors. Because it is everywhere and nowhere, the Empire will destroy itself. Breaking up the nation-state, globalization is also upsetting millions of people and propelling them round the globe in search of work. All of this is to the good because lo! Here come lots of class-strugglers. To Marxists, every least sign of social conflict, no matter how local or limited in scope, has always heralded revolution. Today the class struggle is safe in the hands of immigrants and the tens of thousands of protesters who circle so expensively round Seattle, Prague, Genoa, and other great cities in search of G-8 or World Bank summits where they can throw stones or Molotov cocktails at elected democrats. This book is addressed to them. They must become a multitude. The Empire of globalization is going to prove the latest and surely last stage of capitalism. Just one more shove, comrades. And how will this revolution actually come about? "We await only the maturation of the political development of the posse. We do not have any models to offer for this event."

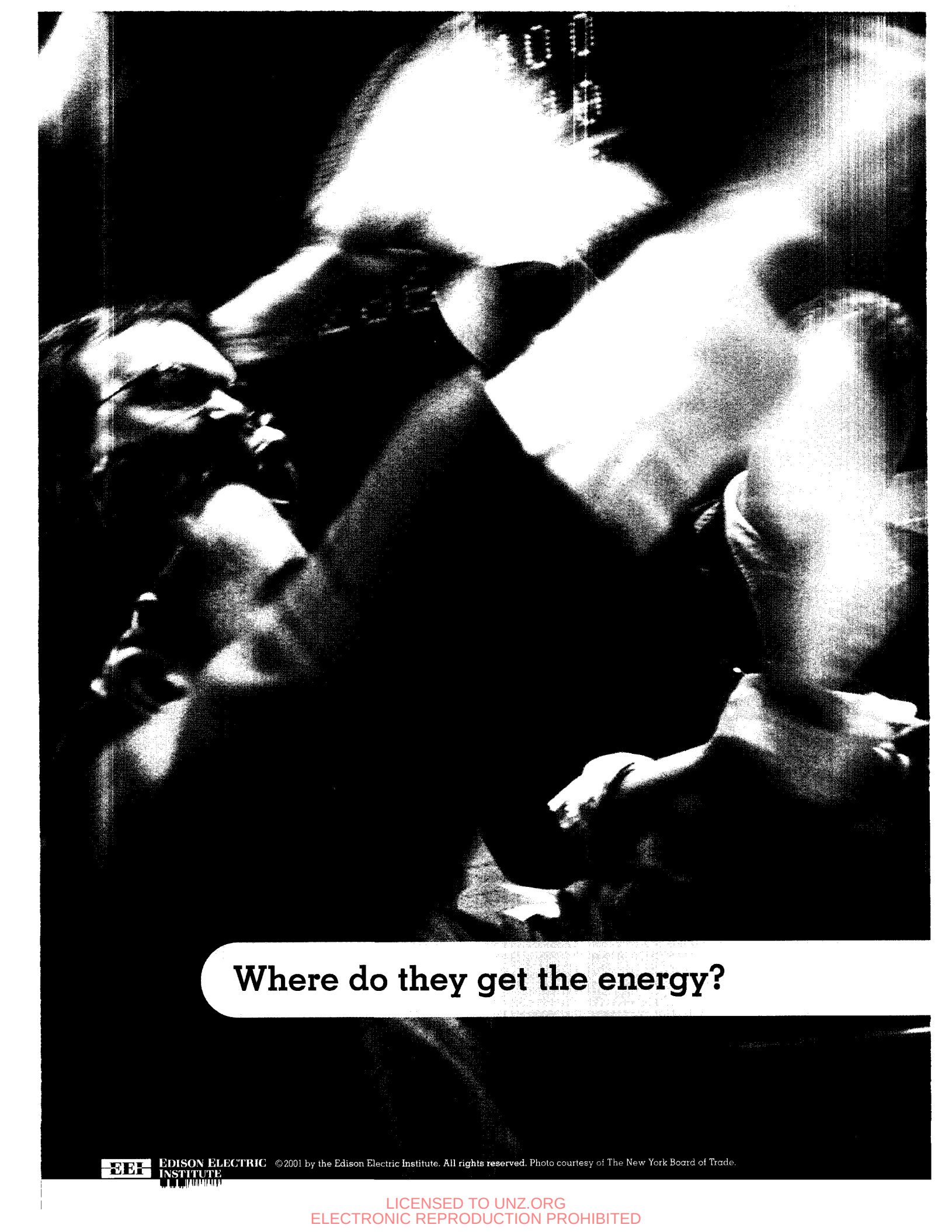
What, no heads of state kidnapped and killed in the manner of Aldo Moro? This is tame indeed. Maturation is not going to send much of a frisson through the posse, nor will it strike fear into the dread capitalists to hear our authors preach in their closing oration: "This is a revolution that no power will control—because biopower and communism, cooperation and revolution remain together, in love, simplicity, and also innocence. This is the irrepressible lightness and joy of being communist."

BEYOND PARODY, AND SHAME

Unfortunately, the combination of Marxism and the French influence has infected our authors' prose with a special *je ne sais quoi* as unintelligible as it is rare in bestsellers, beyond parody and almost beyond paraphrasing. Capitalism is horrid, to give an example, because it functions "through a generalized decoding of fluxes, a massive deterritorialization, and then through conjunctions of these deterritorialized and decoded fluxes." How is a flux decoded, or put through a conjunction? Near the outset of their task, our authors wish to explain how and why capitalism is kaput, and this is how they do so:

Precisely by bringing together coherently the different defining characteristics of the biopolitical context that we have described up to this point, and leading them back to the ontology of production, we will be able to identify the new figure of the collective biopolitical body, which may nonetheless remain as contradictory as it is paradoxical. This body becomes structure not by negating the ordinary productive force that animates it but by recognizing it; it becomes language (both scientific language and social language) because it is a multitude of singular and determinate bodies that seek relation. It is thus both production and reproduction, structure and superstructure.

Et cetera for another 400 pages in that vein. The authors spout neologisms such as *symbology*, *aporia*, *agentic*, *fractal*, *mas-sified subjectivities*, *poetic*, *autopoietic*, *tertiarization*, *striae*, *alterity*, *rhizomatic*. This is a language spoken only in remote and protected native reservations such as Duke University and the darker caves of the liberal press. Theorizing at the level of



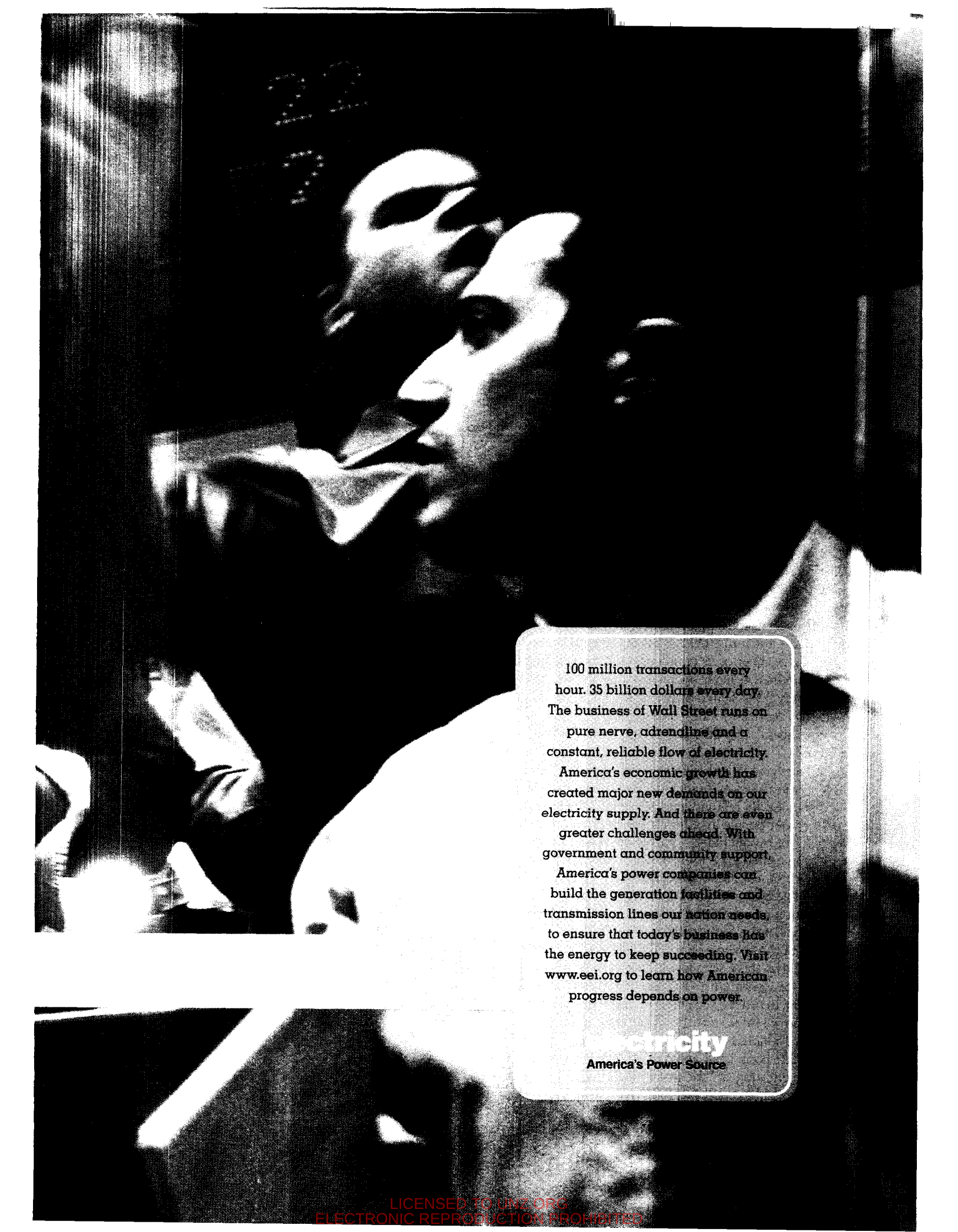
Where do they get the energy?



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absolute abstraction, the book is almost free from fact, history, or plain statement. Virtually the only names mentioned are those of political scientists whose writings can be used to advance class struggle. To specify a politician or capitalist actually taking a decision which influenced events is too vulgarly material for our authors. As usual in the Marxist framework, there is no room for individuals among the forces and contradictions and paradigm shifts supposedly dictating what's happening.

But there is another biopolitical context, as our authors might express it, another ontology of production. Which in plain English means that they are lying about Communism in general and the Soviet Union in particular. All but three or four pages of this book are devoted to the evils of capitalism, the wickedness of democracies and the nation-state, the failure of Americans to live up to the ideals of their Constitution, the uglinesses of modernity, with no sort of acknowledgement of achievements in representative government and the rule of law, in the reduction of poverty and disease, and in the spread of education.

As for Communism, ask its victims and its survivors about the irrepressible lightness and joy of it. Look at the human misery and degradation and waste that went with it. In an unusual instance of providing something concrete, our authors mention the German concentration camp Buchenwald, which they call "a symbol of the extermination of communists, homosexuals, Gypsies, and others." Notice who's missing from that list, which begins with Communists! There were of course such victims in Buchenwald, but survivors have testified that the Communists in the camp, under the leadership of Josef Cyrankiewicz—the future head of the Polish government and a longstanding member of its politburo—set about killing those they had identified as likely opponents after the war, and were therefore every bit as feared as the Nazi guards. Elsewhere we are told that "concentration camps, gulags, ghettos and the like" have "liberal, socialist, and fascist forms," a truly novel obfuscation.

Our authors give only the briefest account of the Soviet system. Here, they say, was "a society criss-crossed by extremely strong instances of creativity and freedom." Having received so much, Soviet people asked for more in order "to express a higher level of productivity." Unable to oblige, Gorbachev's Soviet Union turned in on itself, in what really was "death from the socialist victory of modernization."

Such a travesty is a tribute to the higher idiocy which only an imagination unconnected to reality is able to confect. But the intentions of the authors fall into perspective. They wish to ensure that those who won the Cold War are given no credit for it, and that those who lost it did not deserve to do so. It is essential for Communists to gain control of the history of the Cold War, in order to be able to claim that they were right all along, and we must start the whole experiment over again in some form adapted to today's circumstances. That is what this hot, smart book is all about. Karl Marx it was who said that great events appear "the first time as tragedy, the second as farce." Duke University is a lost cause, it may well be, but even at the *New York Times*, *Time* magazine, and Harvard University Press, you'd think they might be able to dispense with frissons and spot farce for themselves.

NR

Portrait of a Conservative

The contribution of Jesse Helms

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

IN the 1940s musical *Finian's Rainbow*, one of the main characters is a racist southern senator who is given to making speeches along the following lines: "Forward, America! Forward to the principles of our ancestors! Forward to the sweet tranquillity of the status quo!" The twists and turns of the complicated plot have him turned into a black man by a leprechaun's wish, driven out by his former political allies, adopted by a black gospel quartet lacking a baritone, and transformed into a happier and better man as a result.

Many liberals view Jesse Helms as this type of figure, and wish that he would meet a similar fate. Beneath the general establishment backslapping at the news of his departure can be detected a slight sense of disappointment that he is getting off much too lightly. Nixon was forced to resign by the threat of impeachment; Newt Gingrich was evicted by his own troops after an election victory that was mysteriously reported by the media to be a defeat; and Reagan was at least harried into retirement by the Democratic Congress over Irangate. Why is an unrepentant Helms being allowed to depart at a time of his own choosing, after a successful stint as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and amid the regretful cheers of his own side?

Lacking a convenient leprechaun, the Left cannot recreate Helms in its own image; its only alternative is to disparage him. Broadly speaking, there are two conventional views of Helms and his career, and both have been reflected in the news coverage of his decision to retire next year. The first is that Helms was a detestable old bigot who stood in the way of every decent progressive program in politics and that his departure is to be welcomed without qualification. This view is held most commonly by liberal Democrats, but it is shared by others such as conservative or Republican gay activists. To these critics, Helms not only obstructed reforms such as gay marriage; he also made it hard for conservative gays to justify their Republican sympathies in the gay community.

The second view is that Helms has mellowed with time. In his first 20 years in the Senate he was allegedly an unsuccessful firebrand who embraced such unfashionable causes as aid to the Nicaraguan contras and opposition to Mugabe's takeover of Rhodesia/Zimbabwe. But since he became chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee after the 1994 GOP sweep, a cautious moderation has gradually become his hallmark. He made friends with Madeleine Albright, took up such respectable causes as NATO enlargement and reform of the U.S. Foreign Service bureaucracy, and saw these and other reforms through to success. He is

now best seen as a curmudgeonly but ultimately accommodating politician who accordingly leaves Washington with at least a measure of respect. It is sad, therefore, that he has never overcome his distaste for civil rights and must therefore be regarded with some suspicion as perhaps still harboring some racist thoughts.

As with the first view, this depiction of Helms is generally held by Democrats, liberal and moderate, but it is also embraced by liberal and moderate Republicans. They see adamant conservatives like Helms as pursuing a fundamentally unrealistic political strategy of complete resistance to liberalism and progress. Accordingly, they like the idea of his conversion to reasonableness: When one conservative repents, even to the moderate extent of collaborating with Madeleine Albright on State Department reform, there is greater rejoicing in Skull and Bones than over a thousand William Welds who never strayed from a liberal GOP line. The later Helms is thus held to explain the inevitability of moderation.

Both views are, of course, very wide of the mark. Of the two, however, the first and harsher view is much the more plausible. From the standpoint of a feminist or a gay activist, Helms is a detestable old bigot: He opposes abortion, gay marriage, and (in general) the moral revolution of the Sixties. His views on such matters are all the more objectionable to his critics because they are widely shared, being indeed the moral and social orthodoxy of the recent past. As a fearless and implacable opponent, therefore, he might conceivably have become the leader or inspirer of a moral coun-

terrevolution rooted in popular support. No wonder he was regarded by moral radicals with such distaste.

The fact that he expressed himself in the saltiest and most unvarnished terms on these (and all) topics made him even more detestable to his opponents, but it also gave those critics an advantage. References to "sodomites" flouted the reigning Niceness of American culture, offending even some Christian supporters of Helms's ideas who thought that such expressions smacked of uncharitableness. That in turn allowed his foes to paint the opinions of moral traditionalists as the vaporings of a bigoted fringe. Still, even with these flaws, Helms fought for the moral opinions of many, perhaps most, Americans with courage and clarity—and the distaste for him expressed by his opponents is a backhanded recognition of the fact.

The thesis that Helms has mellowed and thus enjoyed some success is little more than liberal and moderate self-justification. Thus it is all the more satisfying that it should be disproved by the defenestration of William Weld. When President Clinton nominated Weld to be ambassador to Mexico, he was seen as a bipartisan liberal glamour boy with a glowing patrician background—another John Lindsay. But Weld had made a serious mistake in his Massachusetts Senate campaign: He had hinted that he would not vote for Helms as Foreign Relations chairman. Combine this blunder with Weld's general liberalism, and it's easy to see why his nomination ran into trouble. Helms sat on the appointment.

The White House, Senate Republicans, and the media all pleaded on Weld's behalf. The nominee himself took up a

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combative stance, declaring that the standoff was a battle for the future of the Republican party. All to no avail: Weld never became ambassador to Mexico, and was last seen in loafers and a polo shirt mixing an excellent dry martini, looking far more like the GOP's past than its future.

That, however, was merely a freeze-frame of Helms's influence in recent years. As Fred Barnes wrote in a 1997 *Weekly Standard* profile—which remains the best assessment of the senator's career—one good measure of his influence is to compare his achievements to those of, say, Trent Lott. Lott rose through the ranks to become in a short time a House Republican whip and, soon after his elevation to the Senate, majority leader. Yet in 1997 the best achievements that Barnes was able to attribute to Lott's leadership were a minimum-wage hike, the Kennedy-Kassebaum health bill, welfare reform, and the budget deal with Clinton. Helms, by contrast, had pulled the entire political spectrum to the right on a large range of issues from the balanced-budget amendment to reform of the United Nations. And he did so largely by the simple process of standing pat. People knew he could not be charmed or bullied into moving his position; so they moved towards him. By contrast, the mind of a liberal Republican comes equipped with a spare set of wheels.

The moderates' portrait of Helms looks even more vulnerable when it is broken down into its separate elements. Take his failed policies in the 1970s and 1980s. What exactly were they? His rash support for the contras? Well, in the end it was U.S. support for the contras that forced the Sandinistas to the conference table, free elections, and eventually into opposition. His wild support for the Salvadoran Right, when even the Reagan administration supported the centrist, land-reforming Christian Democrats? Well and good. It was, however, the centrist government supported by the Reagan administration that failed to crush the guerrillas. When the Arena party, backed by Helms, eventually won an election, it restored stability with a free-market policy and militarily forced the guerrillas to accept a settlement that kept them out of power. His quixotic campaign to prevent Robert Mugabe from taking power in Zimbabwe? Yes, that failed. But in the light of Mugabe's increasingly murderous dictatorship, was the Helms policy more quixotic than the belief of the British and U.S. governments that Mugabe was a man they could deal with?

In short, what the conventional claim of Helms's conservative extremism amounts to is not that his foreign-policy efforts failed—some did, some didn't—but that they ran counter to liberal (and, in El Salvador, neoconservative) orthodoxy. So they failed by definition, rather than in fact.

THE INTERNATIONALIST FROM CAROLINA

The contention that Helms became more moderate in the 1990s is even less persuasive. For example, his brokering of a deal with the United Nations to pay the backlog of American dues was a conservative masterstroke; it resulted in substantial reform of the U.N., which all U.S. governments had previously regarded as impossible. And his famous friendship with Madeleine Albright involved no surrender of principle on either side: They were able to cooperate on NATO and the U.N. because their interests overlapped.

As Walter Russell Mead pointed out in a balanced assessment of Helms in the *Wall Street Journal*, the senator has been the leading (and in Congress almost the sole) representative of the Jacksonian tradition in foreign policy—a tradition that combines a reluctance to interfere in the affairs of other nations with a fierce determination to respond harshly if America's honor or interests are threatened abroad. Mead had previously observed in his classic *National Interest* article that the Jacksonians are the swing vote in foreign policy: When the U.S. is contemplating intervention abroad, they will instinctively oppose it until the insult to the nation grows too great to be borne. Then they will jump in hard, and fight to the finish.

The loss of Helms's Jacksonian voice on the national stage may lead other nations to underestimate American will and power—to the detriment of all, but especially themselves. As long as Jesse Helms was a major force in the Senate deliberations, embassies were never tempted to make that mistake. They knew that the U.S. national interest was something they had to take into account. They were careful to clear their intentions with him as well as with the State Department—and, in his case at least, they got straight answers. With Helms gone, the Jacksonian growl will not be heard, but the Jacksonian beast will still be lurking in the American

hinterland. Diplomats will have to guess its intentions. Their record in such matters does not inspire confidence.

THE RACE CANARD

Particularly on these foreign-policy issues, Helms was (and is) a figure of historic proportions, deserving of great admiration. But even many who concede this are impressed by dark hints of his supposed racism: Was he not a segregationist? Has he not opposed making Martin Luther King's birthday a holiday? Is he not opposed to "civil rights"?

All of these claims are true. But what do they signify? As Mead pointed out, all of the southern (and many of the northern) politicians in both parties were segregationists in the generation of Jesse Helms and indeed later. Segregation was the status quo below the Mason-Dixon line and many decent people gave it a support



Jesse Helms by Roman Genn

they now regret. Helms was one of them. But since the civil-rights revolution, he has accepted the new status quo—and, unlike others, never urged resistance to the law. In Mead's words, he has led his supporters to accept the legal equality of all Americans. His supposed opposition to "civil rights" today turns out upon examination to be resistance to race and gender preferences, which are presently the main obstacle to that legal equality, an inverted version of Jim Crow. In the current P.C. climate, that is enough for a charge of racism.

Helms gets little or no credit for hiring and promoting women and minorities to high positions, both today and in earlier times when it was less fashionable; he is excoriated for waging campaigns that straightforwardly and undeniably claim that preferences for one race are discrimination against another. As for his opposition to Martin Luther King Day, that may well be a political blunder; but Helms's reasons, even if they are rejected, are not to be despised. King was undoubtedly a flawed figure: a womanizer and a plagiarist who was drifting into a social and economic alliance with the radical Left towards the end of his life. Even allowing for his moral stature in politics, he is an uncomfortable sort of role model. But liberal etiquette, though it prides itself on its skepticism and iconoclasm, forbids the raising of such uncomfortable questions; and Helms has paid a high price indeed for raising them.

Where, then, does a fair assessment of Jesse Helms end up? He is a strong conservative in both domestic and international policy. He saw that the policy of constant modest concessions to liberalism—a policy that had been the GOP's grand strategy until Reagan, and, on some issues, even after him—had resulted in neither reasonable compromises nor the respect of opponents. And he drew certain conclusions. Where his opponents were pushing new liberal policies, he resisted them. Where they were prepared to cut a fair deal, he cut it. Where they were vulnerable to conservative attack, he went on the offensive. And in all of these things, he defended his position with firmness, even intransigence. As a result he emboldened other conservatives to take strong positions as well. His "implacability" has been a powerful force behind the conservative successes of the last thirty years. His "no" stiffened many a soft Republican spine.

He has achieved these things on the basis of a North Carolina majority that has never risen above 55 percent, and thus taught the GOP some vital political lessons: You need only 51 percent of the vote to win political battles, and you shouldn't subordinate real policy gains to the fools' gold of a landslide.

Naturally, in the course of thirty years, Jesse Helms has made mistakes, said a few foolish things, and occasionally supported policies that in retrospect look odd. But that is bound to be true of any politician. And on the really big issues, above all Communism and the Cold War, he has been triumphantly right. To illustrate the point, here is a final comparison: Who looks better in the light of the last thirty years—Jesse Helms or another southern politician, Jimmy Carter, who warned us in 1977 not to fall victim to the "inordinate fear of Communism"? As Helms himself once said to a hostile journalist: *Res ipsa loquitur*. NR

Solzhenitsyn, Still

The writer and his latest challenge

JAY NORDLINGER

BECAUSE Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn is one of the great men of the 20th century, it is possible to overlook how prolific and varied he has been as a writer. In his 82 years, he has produced historical novels, "regular" novels, novellas, short stories, "two-part stories," poems, prose poems, plays, autobiographical memoirs, literary memoirs, political essays, philosophical essays, speeches, and that unique, world-shattering book called *The Gulag Archipelago*, which the author described as "an experiment in literary investigation." And now he has produced a history: *Two Hundred Years Together*, a chronicle of "Russian-Jewish interrelations" from 1795 to 1995. The first volume of this work has just appeared in Russia; more will come out in a matter of months. Thus does Solzhenitsyn continue to work, comfort, and incite.

It was in 1990, when he was still in his Vermont exile, that Solzhenitsyn completed *The Red Wheel*, his weighty cycle of novels on the Russian Revolution. While preparing these books, he found that he bumped up repeatedly against "the Jewish question," the role of Jews in Russian history and in what might be called the Russian mind. Yet he did not want to explore this question in *The Red Wheel*, because it is an incendiary one, and because he did not wish to give the cycle the wrong "accent" or "slant." If he had gone deeply into the Jewish question, this may well have engulfed the entire work, causing people to see or argue over nothing else. But he knew the importance of the question, and was reluctant to leave it unaddressed. So he devoted much of the time between 1990 and 2001—essentially the years of his seventies—to *Two Hundred Years*, to this business of the Russians and the Jews.

Which has puzzled more than a few people. Why, they ask, would Solzhenitsyn dabble in this, allotting precious time—twilight time—to this subject, of all the subjects under the sun? David Remnick, in a recent piece in *The New Yorker*, expressed his own puzzlement, saying that "there are books in Solzhenitsyn's oeuvre that are arguably dull or minor but never tangential." The new history, he wrote, "seems anomalous, not at all essential." Many others wish that Solzhenitsyn had never gone near this book for other reasons, which we will take up shortly. But we should at least consider that Solzhenitsyn himself is the best judge of how he ought to spend his time, of what his service should be, of what is important in his writing about Russia, and for Russia, and what is not. Puzzled—even annoyed—as some people may be, the mere fact that Solzhenitsyn thinks this work important should be enough to arrest us and make us think a little along with him.

The author has made abundantly clear that he did not

wish to write this book—far from it. As he says in his Introduction, “I never lost hope that there would come before me a writer who might illumine for us all [the Russian-Jewish question], generously and equitably. . . . I would be glad not to test my strength in such a thorny thicket For many years, I postponed this work and would even now be pleased to avert the burden of writing it. But my years are nearing their end, and I feel I must take up this task.”

But why? Does “the Jewish question” in Russia burn across the landscape, requiring a quenching? Again, Solzhenitsyn speaks well for himself: “What leads me through this narrative . . . is a quest for points of common understanding, and for paths into the future, cleansed from the acrimony of the past. . . . Alas, mutual grievances have accumulated in both peoples’ memories, but if we repress the past, how can we heal them? Until the collective psyche of a people finds its clear outlet in the written word, it can rumble indistinctly or, worse, menacingly.”

■

Solzhenitsyn has always accepted the writer’s duty to serve as a “second government,” a duty especially important when the first government is a brutal and dishonest one.

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These words were translated by Solzhenitsyn’s son Stephan, who lives in Boston. (The book is not yet available in English; Stephan has translated key parts of it.) Another son, Ignat, lives in Philadelphia, and a third, Yermolai, is in Moscow. The sons, along with their mother, Natalia, have participated heavily in the making of the book, helping Solzhenitsyn with such chores as typing (he writes by hand), research, quote-checking, footnoting, and indexing. Rarely has a man been so lucky in his family as Solzhenitsyn has. All are touchingly devoted to him, committed to his work, understanding of his purposes, willing to make sacrifices. It was perhaps the circumstances of exile, and of Solzhenitsyn’s unique position in the world, that forged such bonds. The family, like the author, would have preferred that this project not go forward, with all its sundry headaches, and perils—but each one accepted the need for it.

Elaborating on his father’s words, Ignat says that the new history is meant to “bring us back to the past, make us care about it, and own up to it.” NATIONAL REVIEW, he points out—particularly senior editor David Pryce-Jones—is always calling for an honest accounting of the past, if only for the sake of the present and future (in fact, only for that). This, says Ignat, is part of what *Two Hundred Years* should do. Ideally, it will occasion a kind of “collective repentance,” or at least reflection. The Solzhenitsyn view goes essentially as follows: For ages, Russian nationalists have blamed Jews for all sorts of woes, chiefly the 75 years of Communist rule; others, meanwhile, have ignorantly or maliciously damned the (pre-Bolshevik) Russian state, the Russian people, and “Russianness” itself. Solzhenitsyn attempts to be an arbiter

(and it is this very “evenhandedness” that will bother many critics). The new book is meant to be largely devoid of art or argument, presenting this history in a dispassionate, factual, even dry way. In a recent interview with *Moscow News*, Solzhenitsyn said, “I could not have written this book had I not absorbed myself in both sides.”

Much has been made, over the years, of Solzhenitsyn’s sense of “destiny,” his “prophetic” mission to bring people, particularly Russians, to the truth, about any number of things. Ignat Solzhenitsyn, for one, believes that this portrait is overblown. His father, he says, is hardly the megalomaniac of myth, but a humble man, although with an acute sense of responsibility to others. We have seen that Solzhenitsyn says he was loath to write the Russian-Jewish book, hoping that someone else—such as someone younger and less precariously situated—would step up to the job. No less is true, according to Ignat, of *The Gulag Archipelago* and *The Red Wheel*. Solzhenitsyn, this artist, a man who has burned for literature ever since he was a child, would have preferred to be left with his stories and poems and so on. But he has always accepted the writer’s duty to serve as a “second government,” a duty especially important when the first government is a brutal and dishonest one. Solzhenitsyn has been left with political and historical work, his son insists, “by default.”

WADING IN

Everyone—family, admirers, detractors—agrees on one point: A book treating “the Jewish question” was the last thing Solzhenitsyn needed. The author has been dogged for many years by charges of anti-Semitism, charges that have nibbled at his reputation, that have planted doubt even in those who, on the whole, revere the man. How did these charges come about? As Solzhenitsyn’s books were published, certain critics thought they discerned in some of them one type of anti-Semitism or another. Most of the accusations, and doubts, are absurd. For example, it was said that the novel *Cancer Ward* (1968) had in it no Jewish doctors, and how could that be? Was Solzhenitsyn denying the Jewish role in Russian medicine? Had he concocted a little doctors plot of his own? The book, of course, includes a Jewish doctor, a prominent character named Lev Leonidovich, no less. The novel, like others by Solzhenitsyn, is based on the author’s own experiences, and he has always told it “straight,” say his defenders, even in his fiction. Solzhenitsyn has been attacked both for identifying his characters as Jewish and for not doing so.

David Remnick, in his *New Yorker* piece, wrote truthfully and piquantly when he said, “In the seventies, some third-rate critics seemed to encounter [Solzhenitsyn’s] books with an accountant’s pencil, tallying up ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ portraits of Jews” He then said, “Solzhenitsyn, in fact, is not anti-Semitic; his books are not anti-Semitic, and he is not, in his personal relations, anti-Jewish” (which is certainly incontestable). And yet, Solzhenitsyn has left a few openings for suspicion. His depiction of the historical Parvus, in the book *Lenin in Zurich*, recalls a hoary anti-Jewish stereotype: the “innate” drive for money. While this may have been true of Parvus as an individual, it gave many readers pangs. So did the writer’s handling of the terrorist Bogrov, assassin of the prime minister, Stolypin, in August 1914. Not everyone

who has muttered about Solzhenitsyn has been a leftist out to tarnish the world's indispensable anti-Communist.

One of the most remarkable and searching essays ever written about Solzhenitsyn was by Norman Podhoretz, "The Terrible Question of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn" (*Commentary*, February 1985). William F. Rickenbacker, a late senior editor of *NATIONAL REVIEW*, wrote that this essay was simply "one of the finest things I've ever seen." The piece is not primarily about the Jewish issue, but it does touch on it, as when Podhoretz says, "I can well imagine that in his heart [Solzhenitsyn] holds it against the Jews that so many of the old Bolsheviks, the makers of the Revolution that brought the curse of Communism to Russia, were of Jewish origin . . ." Yet Podhoretz is ultimately a defender of Solzhenitsyn, on this question as on others. He has long stressed the fact that Solzhenitsyn is a powerful supporter of Israel, and that, in our times, anti-Semitism has characteristically found expression in hostility to the Jewish state. Indeed, Solzhenitsyn admires Israel not only "politically," but morally, holding it out as an example of the ability of human beings to resist evil.

There have been times—in the recent *Moscow News* interview, for instance—when Solzhenitsyn has sounded positively philo-Semitic. And it is true that, back in Soviet days, the authorities tried to discredit him by putting out the word that he was, in fact, a secret Jew: real name, "Solzhenitser." In addition, his middle name, or patronymic, Isayevich, looks to some people Jewish, though it is not. It is, of course, a measure of just what anti-Semitism is, or was, in Russia that a government desperate to defame its strongest opponent would call him a Jew. Many in the West, conditioned to hearing that Solzhenitsyn is a "Slavophile," a "right-wing nationalist," a "theocrat," and so on, would be surprised to learn that he has vicious enemies on the right in Russia, who regard him as a tool of Western, or CIA, or Jewish interests.

On this nettlesome question of Solzhenitsyn and the Jews, I myself cannot improve on something my colleague Pryce-Jones says: "Look, just read *The Gulag Archipelago*. In it we find a moral sense that is too strong to be adjustable on the Jewish question." Solzhenitsyn's apprehension of the dignity of man is not divisible.

We should remember, too, that Solzhenitsyn has never cared what his critics had to say about him. This is one of the qualities that make him a peculiar writer, and person. For many years, he did not read a single word that his critics wrote. As Ignat Solzhenitsyn puts it, he could have written *The Red Wheel* or kept up with his critics, but not both. One time, however, in 1983, he did sit down to his critics, reading their complaints and broadsides in one fell swoop. He then answered them in a biting essay published in a Paris-based Russian-language journal. He has done nothing like it since. Similarly, Solzhenitsyn has always disdained public relations. To the occasional exasperation of his admirers, he has never

lifted a finger to make himself popular, never "minded" his language, never held the hands, so to speak, of those who misunderstood him. He never tried to win anyone over, except through the force of his work, and perhaps not even in that. He would rebuff leading journalists in the West because he found their questions immature. After all that he had seen, suffered, and sacrificed, he did not feel the need to justify himself.

While he is largely immune to personal criticism, he is very—extremely—sensitive to criticism of Russia and the Russians, meaning, to criticism that he regards as unfounded. In fact, it may be said that he takes such criticism personally. People will no doubt see in his new history a defensiveness about Russia and some of the historic accusations made against it. Because he is eager to clear his country and compatriots of what he considers slander against them—even as he holds them to account, in his usual unsparing way, for

what he judges their wrongs—he will provide fodder for those prepared to believe that there is something ugly or resentful about him. Some of the book, from what I have been able to review, will ring dissonantly in the Western, certainly in the American, ear. Solzhenitsyn, who has often been called an "ancient man"—and in a complimentary way—does not conform to modern sensitivities. But the honesty and honor of his effort should be undeniable.

Two Hundred Years has been fairly well received in Russia, prompting symposiums, numerous reviews, letters to the editor, and the like. Many have thanked the author for daring to tackle this theme, and for providing the basis for a reasoned public discussion. An editor at *Izvestia* may have been typical when he wrote, before reading the book, "I would have preferred that Solzhenitsyn had not undertaken this." After-

ward, however, with some relief and gratitude, he pronounced the work "extremely important for the healing and normalization of Russian social thought."

Podhoretz, in his 1985 essay, said the following about *The Gulag Archipelago* and *The Oak and the Calf* (Solzhenitsyn's literary memoirs): "[The writer] is returning [to the Russian people] their stolen or 'amputated' national memory, reopening the forcibly blocked channels of communication between the generations, between the past and the present . . ." This serves beautifully as a description of what Solzhenitsyn believes himself doing in his latest, "thorny" (as he says) endeavor. Few appreciative people would dispute that the author has earned the right to any book he deems vital. Malcolm Muggeridge declared him to be "the noblest human being alive." I myself can only offer the conclusion that at the core of Solzhenitsyn's life's work is love. He is sometimes portrayed as a crabbed and angry hermit—and righteous anger he surely has—but his many writings over the decades have plainly been motivated by love: by love of mankind and a determination to lift it up. It is hard to do better than that.

NR



Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn by Roman Genn

China: A Reality Check

Truth and lies in the Asian behemoth

JOHN DERBYSHIRE

THIS summer I spent six weeks in China with my family, traveling all over the country, visiting with friends, relatives, and ex-students. (My wife is mainland-Chinese with a large extended family, and I taught college in China in the early 1980s.) We mainly stayed in the homes of these people—in Beijing, in the Manchurian city of Changchun, in Xi'an, Chongqing, Wuhan, Shanghai, Shenzhen, and Hong Kong.

For me the trip was a useful reality check. I have been writing about China for twenty years: two novels and countless articles in the press. Most of this has been based on remote observation: Since leaving China in 1983, I have visited the country only at long intervals, and briefly, and have depended on media reports, academic journals, books, and conversations with friends and relatives recently out of China. To sit down at leisure with Chinese people in an intimate way in their own country, and discuss their feelings about that country, its government, and the outside world, has been instructive and thought-provoking.

I should preface my remarks with a qualification. As can be seen from the itinerary above, we spent most of our time in large cities, and aside from some random interactions with people like cabdrivers and auto mechanics, all the people we spoke to are urban Chinese of the middle or lower-middle classes. I have nothing to tell you about the Chinese countryside, where 70 percent of China's people live, and where incomes are stagnating while taxes soar; nor about the industrial working classes, on which China's near future may very well depend. (Perhaps no foreign event made a deeper impression on the leadership of the Chinese Communist party than the Solidarity movement in Poland during the 1980s. It is clear from their actions then and since that the rise of such a movement in China is the party's principal nightmare.)

Bearing in mind these limitations, what are my main impressions about the mood of the Chinese people? How do they feel about their government? How strong is their desire for political reform?

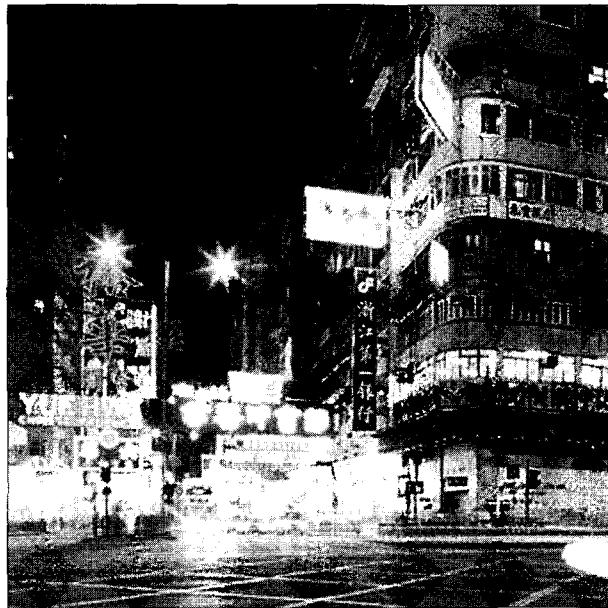
A CULTURE OF COMPLICITY

I am bound to say that I left China in a pessimistic mood. So far as I could see, while the level of discontent in China is in some places, and on some topics, very high, it is nowhere near high enough to threaten the dictatorship. Speaking most generally, in fact, I found the Chinese pretty well contented with their lives. Hardly anyone voices warm admiration of the current national leadership, and one often hears expressions of disgust about some particular incident of corruption or incompetence; but people give the Communists much credit for the great improvements in living standards in the past two decades. The memory of Maoist horrors, though not erased, has been considerably repressed. Mao knew, as every successful totalitarian despot knows, that it is important to get *everyone* involved in the beatings and killings and denunciations. Then everyone shares the guilt, and the few who are sufficiently sure of their own righteousness to make accusations against others are, if anything, resented by the majority. The party's propaganda organs have become skilled at putting the best possible face on past events, glossing them with fictions and excuses (there is an excellent example further along in this article); and these inventions fall on a receptive public—or, in the case of the younger generation, a perfectly ignorant one.

The apparatus of terror is still intact, of course, and the "fear factor" is an important element of Chinese life. I had a pleasantly freewheeling discussion about the Falun Gong with some relatives in a private room we hired at a restaurant. Thus encouraged, a day or two later I asked another relative, who had not been present, what he thought of the movement. This, however, was at an ordinary table in the public area of a different, and rather crowded, restaurant. The poor man nearly jumped out of his skin. "For

goodness sake be careful!" he hissed, flicking nervous glances to left and right. "Don't you know it's a banned organization?" Anyone who has lived in a Communist country can tell of similar things, and China is still a Communist country.

However, the fear factor is not the only, perhaps not even the main, determinant of China's current tranquillity, and to overestimate it is to misunderstand both the temper of the Chinese people and the great success of the Communist party these past few years. By way of illustrating what I mean, here is the concentrated essence of many arguments I have had with thoughtful Chinese people. It begins with me urging the necessity of democratic reform, while Anonymous ("Wu Ming" in Chinese, identified as "WM" in the dialogue below) insists that while he is no supporter of the Communist party:



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WM: . . . an authoritarian party like the CP is a necessary crutch while we go through the present stage of modernization. Look at Taiwan. They were under authoritarian rule until the late Eighties, when the economy took off. Then they moved to political reform. Same in South Korea. We're nowhere near that point yet.

JD: False comparison. Agitation for democratic reform didn't suddenly begin in those countries once they got rich. The two things developed together. And Taiwan had a strong basis of opposition from the beginning—from 1947, when there were mass riots against the Chiang Kai-shek government. That opposition was bound to work its way through to become, in time, an organized political party. China has no equivalent basis of opposition: If you are ever to get rid of the Communists, you must develop one.

WM: I never said political modernization has to follow precisely the path Taiwan followed. I'm only telling you that it can't get under way until our society reaches a certain level of maturity. We haven't reached that level yet. As you yourself know, we Chinese are a difficult and fractious nation, violent in our passions. Representative democracy was invented by the English, a famously cold people. We need an iron hand, at least until we have sufficient wealth and leisure to attend to these things in an orderly way. And who are you to tell us we "must develop" a democratic opposition? Easy for *you* to say from the comfort of New York! Do you know what this regime is *like*? Do you know the things they *do* to those they perceive as opposition?

JD: Yes, I know. But you can't get, or keep, liberty without martyrs. Look at Chen Shui-bian's wife. [Chen Shui-bian is the current president of Taiwan. In 1985, when he was working for political reform on the island, goons from the governing dictatorship organized a traffic "accident" that left his wife paralyzed from the chest down.] I'm sorry if it sounds callous or arrogant, but you know it's true.

WM: Perhaps so, but it's not really the central point. Sure, the fear factor counts. But it's not the main factor in China today, you can see that. The main factor is that we are all aware of the great progress we've made over the past twenty years—yes, under the leadership of the Communists. And *we don't want to endanger that*. It's not just fear, it's *prudence*. Look, consider the stakes for us. Suppose you are wrong. Suppose democratic reform, now or soon, does *not* make us a Taiwan? Suppose it makes us a Russia? Or an Indonesia? Or a Nigeria? Or some corrupt form of "democracy" controlled by military and financial interests, like in South America? Or suppose that, after democratic reform, the big decisions that we all know must be made—closing the state-owned enterprises, lifting restrictions on free movement of labor—*can't be*

made because they are unpopular? Your program sounds fine in theory, but you see what a gamble it is for us. Contrariwise, suppose you are right. What do we have to lose by failing to reform? Only a few decades, that's all. See, we have too much to lose if you are wrong, and too little to gain if you are right. That's why, from a practical point of view, you are wrong even if you are right, and the CP is right even though they are wrong!

JD: And the higher principles of political life? Liberty? Justice? Constitutional government? Do they count for nothing in China?

WM: For very little, at the present time. Those things have no roots in our country, you know that. It's not as if we had them and then lost them. We have never had them. And Chinese people of the present day can remember all too well the chaos and the physical hardships of the recent past. They are glad for the relative comfort, security, and prosperity of their lives today. They are glad to see their country's voice being listened to with respect in world councils. They are glad to see our national rights being asserted, after they were trampled on for 200 years. Sure, we know the Communists are corrupt, cynical, and cruel; but we give them credit for getting at least *some* things right—things that matter to us ordinary Chinese, in our everyday lives. And a nation must be



'The propaganda has been very successful'

governed, you know. If the Communists don't do it, who will? The dissidents you admire so much? Who can't even agree among themselves on what day of the week it is? Who have never run anything bigger than a student debating club? Please. Do you think it's easy to govern a country like China?

FEAR OF FALLING

It is very difficult to counter arguments like these—arguments presented not by sneering Communist-party shills, but by decent, reflective middle-class people very much like oneself. Wu Ming lives in a pleasant air-conditioned apartment. His daughter is doing well in school, and plays piano beautifully. His company is expanding, and he himself just got a big raise. His wife has passed a test for an advanced professional qualification, which will mean a promotion at her workplace. This year he will take his family on vacation to a new mountain resort that's just opened up. He dreams of buying a car, perhaps four or five years from now, and of attending the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. Sure, he knows about the scandals, the cruelties, the corruption, and the oppression. An elderly woman in the next town, who tried to stick up a Falun Gong poster, was arrested and beaten. He knows about that, and thinks it's disgraceful. But he also knows that if he stays well

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clear of such things, busies himself with his job and his family life, the authorities won't bother him.

The Communist party, of course, understands how Wu Ming feels, and pitches its propaganda very skillfully to his hopes and fears. The parlous state of the former Soviet Union is very well advertised in the Chinese media. So are any disorders or misfortunes that occur in Asian countries that have embraced political liberalization. "See, this is what happens when you experiment with democracy," is the implied message. The propaganda factor, along with the fear factor and the prudence factor, is of key importance in understanding current Chinese attitudes toward their own society and the outside world. Information is no longer as strictly controlled as it once was. A curious, ingenious, and persistent Chinese person can, with very little danger, learn many things the Communist party does not want him to know. Alas, very few Chinese people have the time or inclination to make the necessary effort. They take their information from the official media, supplemented by rumor and "political education" in the schools. As a result, much of what they believe is false. They have the utmost difficulty in grasping this, though, since everyone else they know believes the same things.

Take, for example, the terrible famine of 1959–61—the Mao famine, to give it its proper name. This was the greatest human calamity of the 20th century, excepting only World War II. Somewhere between 25 and 30 million people died. The causes of the famine are not in serious dispute. The policies of the Chinese Communist party, under the leadership of Mao Tse-tung, brought about the whole disaster, and then prolonged it unnecessarily. British Sinologist Jasper Becker has written a fine book, *Hungry Ghosts*, setting out the details. For the Communist party of today, the famine presents a serious image problem. They can hardly pretend it didn't happen. Everybody in China *knows* it happened: Any Chinese person over the age of thirty can tell you a famine story, either from his own experience or transmitted from older family members. The task for the government's propaganda department has been to absolve the party of all responsibility, to place the blame for the catastrophe elsewhere, preferably on foreigners. This has now been done, with total success. Ask a Chinese person about the causes of the famine and you will hear some variant of the following tale: "After Liberation [i.e., the Communist takeover in 1949], Chairman Mao asked the Russians to help us reconstruct. Soon, however, he saw that they did not really want to help us, they wanted to dominate us. So he asked them to leave. The Russians demanded immediate repayment of all their loans, and repatriation of, or payment for, all the equipment they had installed. They

threatened war if this was not done. To spare the nation this war, and to save the national honor, Chairman Mao called on the people to make great sacrifices. Unfortunately, this came at a time of adverse weather conditions . . ."

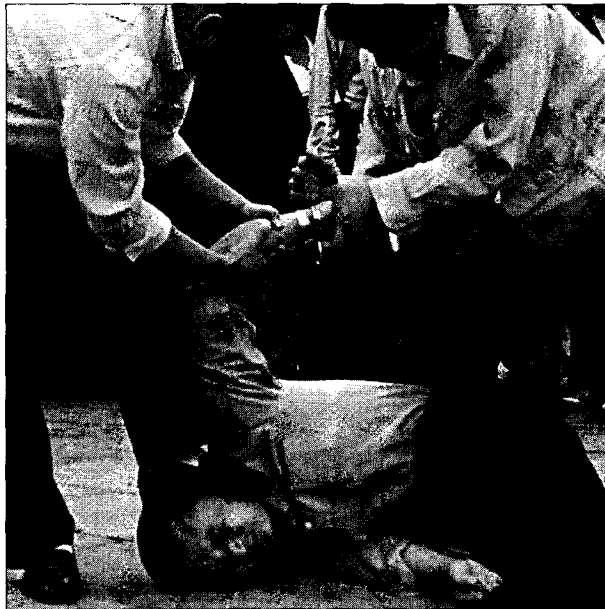
There is, of course, not a shred of truth in this account. It is, however, believed by all Chinese people, and appears in high-school history textbooks. Note that the fable not only absolves Mao and his party of all guilt, it even presents the whole ghastly incident as a triumph of national integrity. And this last point—bringing in the matter of national honor—is the stroke of true genius in this little propaganda masterwork. I have written before in these pages about the atavistic imperialism of the Chinese ("Communist, Nationalist, and

Dangerous," April 30). Probably there is no greater service a Chinese government could perform for the peace of the world than to wean the Chinese people away from these poisonous premodern attitudes; but the policy of the present dictatorship is to nurture and strengthen them. One thing you can never get Chinese people to talk about at all is the "national question"—that is, the question of China's borders. It is simply not an issue for any Chinese person. If you try to raise it, they just look puzzled. Taiwan? "What's the difficulty? Hong Kong and Macao came back to the Motherland with no problems." Tibet? Turkestan? Inner Mongolia? "Always part of China. Every-

body knows that." All argument is useless here. They wave it away with a laugh. Foreigners believe such weird things! But then, what can foreigners know about China?

DENIAL IS A RIVER IN CHINA

In fact, one of the more depressing things about China, if you are a person with a deep interest in the country and its history, is how little the Chinese themselves know. Any foreigner who makes an effort to do so can easily become better informed about recent Chinese history than the Chinese are. Talking to young relatives in Changchun, for example, I was surprised to find that they had never heard of Gao Gang, the great Manchurian warlord of the early 1950s. With the support of Stalin, who did not like Mao Tse-tung, Gao declared Manchuria an autonomous state under Soviet protection and actually issued his own currency at one point. He was an old party war-horse, had in fact been in charge of the base at Yan'an when Mao arrived there with his battered, exhausted troops at the end of the Long March. "If not for me, Mao would be nothing," Gao boasted. "He came to me a beggar in rags!" A wiser man would not have said this. Stalin's death left Gao naked to his enemies; outmaneuvered at a party meeting in 1954, he was disappeared. The official version is that he committed suicide. ("His last act of anti-Party betray-



'The apparatus of terror is still intact, of course'

© Corbis/Chien-min Chung

al," hisses the Communist encyclopedia.) I happened to be in China during a great gush of movies and TV documentaries to celebrate the party's 80th anniversary. Gao did not appear in any that I saw. Other inconvenient figures in the history of the party—like Zhao Ziyang, who took the wrong side in the 1989 disturbances, and Hua Guo-feng, Mao's designated successor—have also been airbrushed out.

The histories of the conquered territories are even more inaccessible, and hardly any Chinese person knows any true facts about them. Nobody outside China who has examined the matter could possibly believe that "Tibet has always been a part of China." That, however, is of no importance. Everybody *inside* China believes it, and that is sufficient for a Chinese person, who in any case is aware—the Communists remind him of it endlessly—that maleficent foreigners are forever plotting to weaken and dismember the Motherland by trickery and the sowing of falsehoods. Life in China has a peculiarly claustrophobic quality to it, which every foreigner feels after a few weeks in the country. This is the root of the well-known phenomenon called "China fatigue," in which foreigners who start out with the best will in the world toward China and her people end up hating the place. An acquaintance of mine, who for some years served as the Beijing office manager of a large international investment bank, suffered badly from China fatigue, and had to take a long vacation twice a year, "or else I'd start breaking things." China really is—*still is*—a world within the world, to whose inhabitants the lands Beyond the Wall are, fundamentally, of very little interest. I found it very difficult, even in those big cities, to get Western newspapers and magazines. Even airport newsstands do not sell them. (The only exception I found was at the new Pudong Airport in Shanghai.) Nor do bookstores; nor do any but the grandest hotels.

My feeling, as I have made plain, is that the present dictatorship is more firmly established than I had thought before I went to China. The urban middle classes, who are supposed to be the driving force behind political reform, do not like the Communists very much, but they do not mind them very much either. The propaganda of the Communist party, even at its most mendacious, has been very successful, and overwhelming numbers of Chinese people believe what the party wants them to believe. Where economics and propaganda fail them, the Communists can still rely on fear. Everyone knows what they are capable of. From this point of view, the events of 1989 greatly strengthened the dictatorship, as of course they were intended to do. I cannot see any reason why the Communists should not go on ruling China and her imperial possessions indefinitely.

It is, of course, *possible* that the stabil-

ity I saw is all an illusion. My visit was brief, and restricted in the ways I have described. Some other observers, with perhaps better claims to understanding, detect tremendous tensions beneath the surface of Chinese life. Gordon Chang, who has lived in China for twenty years, argues in his new book, *The Coming Collapse of China*, that the nation's economy is all make-believe, and that China's entry into the World Trade Organization this year or next will bring it all crashing down. He calls China "a lake of gasoline." Well, I heard some bitter grumbling, especially from the lower ranks of Chinese society, but I cannot truthfully say that I smelled gasoline. It seems to me, so far as it is possible to know anything about such matters, that China's rulers are well aware of the dangers inherent in WTO accession, and are preparing for them in their own way. That, I think, is what lies behind the current wave of repression. When you know there are some bumps in the road ahead, you want everything on the truck strapped down tight.

I think the Communists may well ride out present dangers, and maintain sufficient public support, or at least indifference, to see them safely through WTO accession and forward to a triumphant and well-organized Olympic spectacular that will further cement their hold on the nation. Prognostications about China are always hazardous, and risk making one look a fool in five or ten years' time, but I see no great changes in China's near future. As a lover of liberty, justice, and truth, I say this sadly, in frustration; but also, thinking of my Chinese friends and relatives, with much sympathetic understanding.

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THE LONG VIEW

By Rob Long

Memo

TO: The Story Department
FROM: The Marketing Department
RE: The Gary Condit Project

First off, let me reiterate what was said at today's staff meeting: everyone in marketing is totally excited about fast-tracking the Gary Condit Project (GCP) through the system. With enough teamwork and diligence, we can get a pretty decent GCP into theaters in time for the summer.

But we do have some thoughts as we get into the script development phase:

We're concerned that the Condit character (probably Michael Douglas—still in negotiation) comes off as too unlikable. We want audiences to root for this guy as he outwits the DC cops and Connie Chung, but as currently written he seems creepy and distinctly unheroic. Also, if we do get Julia Roberts to play Chandra (longshot—she's got three projects lined up before the winter), then we think we've got a BIG problem marketing-wise and word-of-mouth-wise. People go to a Julia Roberts picture wanting to see Julia Roberts—not wanting to see people LOOK for Julia Roberts.

Also, we're not sure that Oliver Stone is the best choice to direct the picture as currently scripted. Our feeling is that he'll make Washington DC the "star" of the picture, and the love story will kind of take a backseat. This would be a mistake: a summer picture needs that love-story angle to sell it to

the over-30's (our target audience). People in that demographic gravitate to a softer, more romantic storyline—it has something to do with being in the "twilight" years of life. So, ultimately, any choice for a director should be able to bring the story a certain romantic touch.

Some thoughts about the story:

Is there any real reason why she has to disappear totally after the first act? We think this is a BIG waste of star power and really hurts our female appeal. Couldn't she be in a locked basement somewhere? Or trapped in an out-of-the-way cabin? I know that Michael Douglas's people are dead-set against it, but we're really talking about a co-lead here—it's very much a Gary AND Chandra story (although we'll need to beef up one of the cop characters—Morgan Freeman??—and who knows who we'll get to play Connie Chung), and it just seems like bad story-telling that they have that one early bedroom scene and then she's out of the picture. If we do get Julia Roberts, we're talking about a \$20 million payday, and if we pay someone \$20 million to play Chandra Levy, I think we owe it to our shareholders to see to it that Chandra Levy is found early in the third act.

A possible scenario: We do the whirlwind-romance stuff in the first act, get into the kinky-sex thing around page 12, they have the big fight (and his first "I love you, too") around page 14, then, distraught, she takes off for a remote cabin in the hills of West Virginia (is that near D.C.? Which states are around there? No

one in marketing knows where those places might be) just to "get her head together." Two weeks later, refreshed and empowered, she heads down to the local store and sees the headline in the newspaper: "Chandra Levy Missing!" That's your big first-act break. Turns out she likes seeing her faithless boyfriend twisting in the wind, so she's determined to stay missing. So the story becomes more about Condit's cross-country search for her as he's pursued by federal investigators—sort of like "The Fugitive" meets "It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World."

Another scenario: She's dead by page 15, say (assuming we DON'T get Julia Roberts—anyone \$5 million or less is easily killable in the first act), but we know that Condit didn't do it. He's caught in a frame-up (keeps him super-likable), is distraught over the death of the woman he loved (note: need to cast unsympathetic wife), and dons a disguise to unearth the true killer. We suggest adding a crusty older character—a Wilford Brimley type—and/or a sassy no-BS congressional aide (note: African-American casting a MUST) who believe in their boss no matter what the media says and help him trap the true killer in a clever trap (get the writers to figure one out). Possible true killers include: someone from one of the tobacco companies (maybe Chandra was preparing for controversial hearings and had some damning evidence? Do interns do that kind of thing?); someone from Big Oil (see previous parenthetical); Trent Lott; Newt Gingrich.

Again, these are just suggestions to make it a more marketable picture. But if you guys in Story are set on making a true-to-life story about an evil congressman, at least make it believable: make him a Republican.

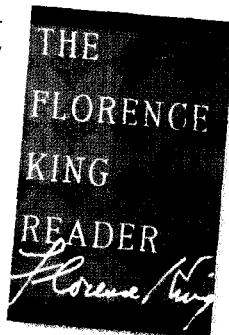
She's America's Misanthrope. She's the Queen of Spleen. She's Florence King.

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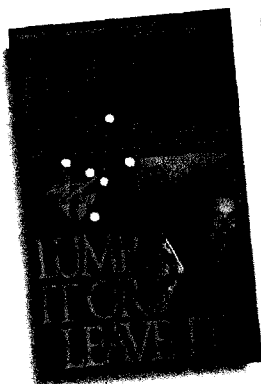
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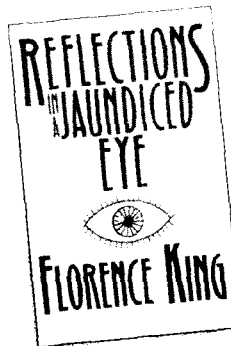
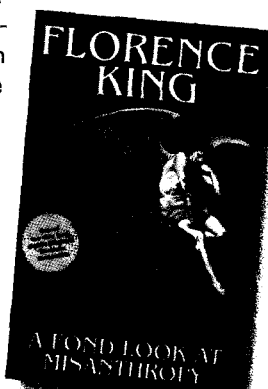
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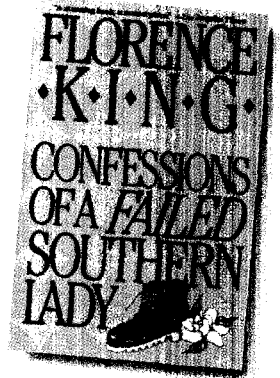


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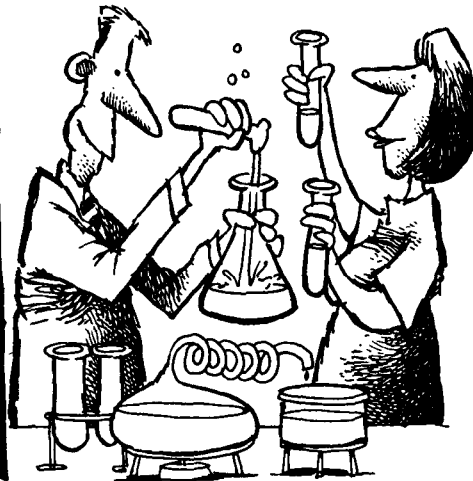
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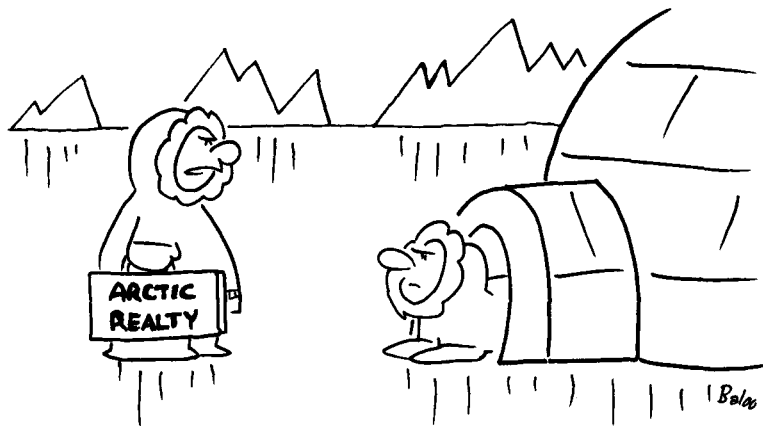
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"Well, of course the basement is flooded!"

GEPHARDT'S POISE

*It held up, actually, till
The interview—which caused a chill;
At which time, the Modesto Bee,
Like Zola at his apogee,
Demanded Gary Condit quit.
This hit Dick Gephardt like warm spit
And left him fuming, left him stung;
So let us now praise Connie Chung.*

—W. H. VON DREELE



BOOKS, ARTS & MANNERS

NYC, Before the Dawn

JOHN PODHORETZ

The Ungovernable City: John Lindsay and His Struggle to Save New York, by Vincent J. Cannato (Basic Books, 702 pp., \$35)

TWENTY-EIGHT years after he departed Gracie Mansion, John Lindsay is all but forgotten. Other than a single sad stab at a Senate race in 1980, the man who had served for eight tumultuous years as mayor of New York City quickly sank into obscurity to a degree shocking for a man who had once been one of the nation's most famous and glamorous politicians. You might almost consider Lindsay the political equivalent of a lava lamp or a Suzy Homemaker oven—a curio from the 1960s that now sells for a few bucks on eBay.

When he died last year at the age of 79, Lindsay proved a bit difficult to eulogize. The city he had run between 1966 and 1973 had become a much different place in recent years—a place happily free of nostalgia. In Lindsay's day, New Yorkers had little to go on but nostalgia. They spent a great deal of time recalling more glorious days when they could walk the streets safely at night and ride graffiti-free subways. In Rudy Giuliani's New York, people can again walk the streets safely at night and ride graffiti-free subways. Now memories of previous decades cause shudders rather than smiles.

It was during Lindsay's tenure as

Mr. Podhoretz is a political columnist for the *New York Post* and a cultural columnist for National Review Online (www.nationalreview.com).



John Lindsay (right) with WFB, 1965

Cornell Capa, Magnum

mayor that New York slid headlong into chaos, barbarity, and recklessness of all sorts—fiscal, behavioral, and moral. And everybody knows it, even those who once worked for Lindsay and would wish to believe their young idealism served a positive purpose. Most of them don't go as far as Henry Stern, the loose-lipped parks commissioner under both Giuliani and Ed Koch, who today dismisses Lindsay as a "radical dope." But there's no denying the city took 20 years to recover from the Lindsay administration. And it got itself firmly on the right track by electing a mayor who was everything Lindsay was not.

Rudy Giuliani is bereft of charm, is at daggers drawn with the leadership of the black community, and is detested by the liberal media. But Giuliani won't stand for disorder, he won't be bullied by race-baiters, he considers welfare a threat to the moral health of its recipients, and he doesn't think cops are more dangerous than criminals. And he has presided over a period in New York City that all but the most blindly left-wing acknowledge is a golden age.

So what could Lindsay's eulogists say on his behalf as they looked around town and saw nothing of value he had left behind? They were left to wax rhapsodic about his fantastic good looks (Lindsay was probably the most handsome American politician of the 20th century) and patrician mien, converting him into a kind of posthumous political

himbo, a mix of Jack Kennedy and Austin Powers.

Just about the only positive sentiment offered on the late Lindsay's behalf was that he cared deeply about the suffering of New York's black population. Lindsay had walked ghetto streets in times of turmoil and thus kept New York from being torn apart the way other cities were in the late 1960s. "He made himself visible in all the minority communities," wrote a nostalgic Jack Newfield. "In a time when Newark and Detroit and Watts burned, New York did not."

Ah, but burn New York did, as Vincent J. Cannato reveals in his terrific and definitive work of modern urban history, *The Ungovernable City: John Lindsay and His Struggle to Save New York*. It didn't burn as severely as other cities, perhaps, but then the suffering residents of other cities didn't physically attack firemen when those heroic workers arrived to put out blazes set by rioters. In John Lindsay's New York, things got so bad for firefighters that their desperate union created an ad campaign with the unbelievable slogan: "You wouldn't fight a friend. So don't fight the fireman—he's your friend. Welcome him to your neighborhood."

Part of the reason Lindsay got un-

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warranted credit for keeping the streets calm was that he and his staff knowingly lied about how bad things were. That's one of the many eye-opening discoveries to be mined from Cannato's book. "On three separate occasions during the summer of 1967, certain areas of the city were in anarchy," Cannato writes. "Three people died and 45 were injured in July and one person died and 58 were injured in September."

Cannato notes that these were "riot[s] by most people's definition," yet Lindsay and his administration were always careful to use only the word "disturbance" to describe any breakdown of civil authority. Why? According to Cannato, in July 1967 President Lyndon Johnson had appointed Lindsay vice chairman of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. Lindsay intended to make the most of this appointment to the panel, which came to be known as the Kerner Commission. He wanted to use it as a means to place urban issues at the top of the national agenda and push for increased federal spending on cities. But he believed that "as one of the most liberal members of the panel, if his ideas were going to carry any weight, there had to be no riots in the streets."

And so, Cannato says, Lindsay simply "defined away any rioting."

Lindsay was a politician who prided himself on his commitment to principle. He had written his senior thesis at Yale on Oliver Cromwell, and his "political career was imbued with the Puritan notions of liberty of conscience and reform." He cast almost every conflict during his career in terms of good and evil—an affect that gave his rhetoric a lot of oomph, even when he was merely complaining about contract talks with municipal unions.

And yet, in his refusal to use the word "riot" when it was the *mot juste*, Lindsay proved himself an early practitioner of what has come to be called "spin." Lindsay and the team of arrogant young men he brought into City Hall with him believed that the ends justified the means—that they cared so deeply about New York and its minorities that any little lie they might have told was made pure as the driven snow by their good intentions.

Lindsay wanted to do good. He meant

well. So he not only embraced welfare, but hired a welfare commissioner who aggressively sought to enlist people in the welfare rolls—and kept benefits so high that it made economic sense for the able-bodied to become dependent. And Lindsay scoffed at the notion that work itself was empowering and ennobling. "The Negro has been washing cars, shining shoes, and mopping floors for most of this century, and now he understandably wants something better," he said in 1968. Cannato notes that "this attitude severely hampered any attempt to get the ever-growing number of welfare recipients off the dole and into the workforce."

■ Lindsay and his staff knowingly lied about how bad things were. ■

During testimony before the Senate Finance Committee, Lindsay was asked why welfare recipients couldn't be put to work cleaning the city's streets. Lindsay responded: "The use of welfare mothers with brooms and spikes in the middle of Fifth Avenue brings us back to the Dark Ages." The suggestion, he continued, was "rather extraordinary in view of modern thought."

Lindsay's sympathy for the poor was literally excruciating. He loved black people so much he allowed thugs to run roughshod over their neighborhoods—because to intervene would be to stifle their understandable rage. "We are not going to turn disorder into chaos through the unprincipled use of armed force," Lindsay said in explaining why he would not use police to quell riots, which did little but damage the homes and livelihoods of ghetto residents. "We are not going to shoot children in New York City."

Lindsay's police commissioner, Howard Leary, spoke in the true voice of liberal racism when he innocently defamed Martin Luther King in defending the NYPD's hands-off policy during the riots sparked by King's assassination. "Sixty percent of the looters were under sixteen," Leary said. "What were we

supposed to do, shoot the next Martin Luther King?"

Oh, yes, of course: Martin Luther King, teenage looter.

Everywhere in John Lindsay's New York, things fell apart. He mishandled public-sector strikes by teachers and subway workers—which led to the effective takeover of city schools and transportation by New York State. Hippies turned Greenwich Village's Washington Square Park into an open-air drug market. Aides to Lindsay secretly offered community-outreach money—otherwise known as "bribes"—to fomenters of chaos like Abbie Hoffman. And most chillingly, senior police officials actively impeded an investigation into a cop killing at Louis Farrakhan's Harlem mosque.

All the evidence suggests that the killing was a deliberate hit. Police officers entered the 116th Street mosque only because they had received a fraudulent distress call indicating that a fellow officer had been shot. The cops were set upon as soon as they entered, and Officer Philip Cardillo was shot point-blank in the chest. Farrakhan arrived, accompanied by Rep. Charles Rangel, and demanded that the men being held by other officers be released.

"Go! Go!" Farrakhan and Rangel allegedly told Chief of Detectives Albert Seedman. "If you stay, there is nothing we can do to protect you. You'll be overrun. There'll be rioting. People may be killed." Seedman was finally ordered by his superiors to release the prisoners already in custody. Farrakhan promised

Seedman that the suspects would show up at the precinct house later that afternoon. No one ever showed up . . .



It turned out that police commanders in Harlem had negotiated a secret deal with Muslim ministers to treat mosques as "sensitive locations" into which no cop would enter with a gun. But nobody had told the cops about the secret deal. After being handled with kid gloves, Farrakhan turned around and libeled the mortally wounded police officer and his partner, accusing them of "charging into our temple like criminals and they were treated like criminals."

When Cardillo died, neither the police commissioner nor Lindsay attended the funeral, in a horrifying breach of city tradition. "I don't think they dared come," said Cardillo's widow. Lindsay, whose political instincts were often unsound, was off skiing in Utah.

Lindsay's innate lack of sympathy for the city's police officers was mirrored by his innate lack of sympathy for the white ethnics who lived in the city's outer boroughs. Their lives weren't easy, but Lindsay seemed to think that they ought to take a back seat because blacks had been forced to sit in the back for so long. He raised their taxes, tried to bus kids in to their schools, and tried to build high-rise housing projects in their neighborhoods. And while their kids were off fighting in Vietnam, Lindsay was becoming an ever more radical spokesman against the war. That stance certainly endeared him to the Manhattan liberals who formed his base, but his insensitivity to the feelings of millions of his constituents again gives the lie to the notion that he was above all things a politician "who cared."

Cannato's book is the most impressive work of New York City history since Robert Caro's *The Power Broker*, and it shares with that masterful account of the life and times of Robert Moses a quiet but persistent distaste for its subject. Cannato wants to be fair (fairer, certainly, than Caro was). But even though he struggles to find something, anything, to offer in praise of Lindsay's work as mayor, the evidence will not allow him to do so. "During one of the most tumultuous eras in American history, Lindsay was a deeply polarizing figure," Cannato concludes. "He was a divider, not a uniter. Under his administration, racial and ethnic divisions only worsened. . . . It is true that John Lindsay did not cause the urban crisis, but one must not discount the fact that it worsened under his watch."

Perhaps the most pointed observation quoted in *The Ungovernable City* comes from the man who ran an insurgent mayoral campaign against Lindsay in 1965. "Mr. Lindsay," said William F. Buckley Jr. in 1968, "has a genius for bringing out the worst in liberalism." And that, alas, is the truest epitaph of the political career of John Vliet Lindsay.

NR

Salzburg, for Real

ROGER KIMBALL

I ALWAYS found it faintly irritating when people collared me and began expatiating on their visits to Salzburg. So many superlatives crowded together had a bad effect, like rubbing velvet the wrong way. The medieval city was so charming; the surrounding mountains were so beautiful; the ubiquitous music was so captivating. Dirndls, Mozart, *The Sound of Music*—*genug!* Enough already. It gets cloying, like being presented with an extra-large Salzburger Nöckerln after too much Wiener schnitzel.

That was before my wife and I actually went to Salzburg a couple of weeks ago. This medieval city, bisected by the glittering Salzach river and replete with a crenellated fortress and Renaissance churches every 15 feet, is picture-book charming. The surrounding Alpine peaks, like some bespoke illustrations of the sublime, are breathtakingly beautiful. And the music—most of it, anyway—is utterly captivating.

There are undoubtedly twee bits. Not the dirndls, surprisingly: I discovered that you can't have too many of them. But I have made it this far without seeing *The Sound of Music* and intend to keep it that way. As for the Divino Mozartino, I like his stuff as much as the next chap. And I must say that the performance of *The Magic Flute* at the Marionette Theater was absolutely enthralling: Somehow that opera was made to be performed by intelligent puppets. Still, when even the airport is named after Mozart one begins to chafe. Mozart Kugeln and memorabilia are everywhere. Yes, yes, Mozart was born in Salzburg, and the city worthies have turned his birthplace on the Getreidegasse into a sort of flypaper-for-

tourists shrine. They omit to tell you that he detested the place and fled as soon as he was able. We had lunch with the great-great-niece-or-something of the count who booted young Wolfgang Amadeus down the stairs at the prince archbishop's house for some piece of effrontery. Can you blame him for leaving?

What he left behind was his music. Salzburg is famous for its music partly because of Mozart, partly because of the annual summer music festival that the composer Richard Strauss, the poet and playwright Hugo von Hofmannsthal, and the theatrical producer Max Reinhardt started in 1920. (Talk about starting strong.) The festival's real glory days came later, under the iron hand of Herbert von Karajan, the Bismarck of 20th-century conductors and another native son of Salzburg.

Salzburg was originally intended only as the temporary HQ of the music festival; Strauss & Co. hoped to find some place even more picturesque outside the city. But familiarity bred affection. The festival now takes place in three theaters, all under one roof, in a sprawling structure that is nestled firmly into the base of the Mönchsberg. (Fifty thousand cubic meters of rock were excavated in the 1950s to make room for the large festival hall.)

The most dramatic of the three spaces is the middle theater, the Felsenreitschule—the "rock riding

school"—originally an open-air arena constructed as an exhibition space at the end of the 17th century. Hewn into the rock of the mountain are almost 100 arched galleries arrayed one on top of the other in three stories. They make an extraordinary backdrop. We saw the premiere of a new production of Leoš Janáček's 1904 opera *Jenufa*

there. It is a magnificent, melodramatic space for a magnificent, melodramatic work that has it all: blighted love, knife-scarred beauty, and infanticide. The production was a bit pomo for my taste: At certain crucial points, the set-designer's proscenium light box triumphed decidedly over the story, making rather a hash of the action. But the music—featuring the Czech Philharmonic under the baton



Mr. Kimball is managing editor of *The New Criterion*.

of Sir John Eliot Gardiner—was simply splendid, as was the singing. The Finnish soprano Karita Mattila delivered a lush and compelling performance in the title role, and the venerable Hildegard Behrens—singing in tough, unvarnished voice—was perfect as the tragic stepmother.

The problem with the Salzburg festival is that over the last ten years its director, the campy Belgian impresario Gérard Mortier, has been playing a vigorous game of catch-up in the no-win trendiness stakes. But Mortier is leaving the directorship of the festival; his departure may mean that we will have fewer posters of transvestites advertising the operas, and fewer productions like the *Marriage of Figaro* we saw. Poor Mozart! He had some accomplished singers looking after his music—Peter Mattei as Count Almaviva was especially fine—but, oh dear, what a production. Set in a bridal-dress shop (why?), it featured a kind of hippie character in blue jeans and stringy hair wandering around the stage with a chair affixed to his rear end and playing the recitatives on a Moog synthesizer, beer bottles, and other “period instruments.”

Why do this to Mozart? Clearly, the producers felt that Mozart by himself was not enough—he had to be dolled up with the latest “transgressive” flapdoodle in order to charm the audience. No wonder Mortier was recently described by one dedicated operagoer as an “exemplary buffoon.” I left at the interval. Had I known that the audience was going to boo the director and set designer at the end, I would have come back to join in the fun, but only later did I find out about that gratifying development.

Just before the festival opened this year, Mortier publicly denounced the climate in Salzburg as “reactionary.” In fact, the climate in Salzburg is heavily socialist, but never mind. Perhaps what he meant was that for decades Salzburg meant serious performances of serious music. We can hope that the replacement of Mortier by the German composer Peter Ruzicka will mark a return to that invigorating spirit. We can also hope that rumors about radical changes

CAMDEN, 1892

The fragrance of fresh coffee and newsprint
Dispels the null of Sunday. On the bed,
Newspapers with some allegoric rhymes
Sent by a happy colleague. The wide light
Of morning floods his window. The old man
Lies prostrate now, pale in a small bare room,
The walk-up of a renter. Listlessly
He views his image in a mottled glass
And mumbles to himself without surprise,
That man is me. A desultory hand
Touches the tangled beard, the wasted mouth.
The end is not far off. His voice declares,
I am nothing, but my poems remain
Singing life and its splendor. I was Walt Whitman.

—RICHARD O'CONNELL
from the Spanish of Jorge Luis Borges

being made to Hofmannsthal's play *Jedermann* are unfounded: Open-air performances of that remarkable allegory about the death of a rich man have been a Salzburg specialty for decades, and the performance we saw was riveting. Any substantial change is bound to be a change for the worse.

All in all, I think signs are good for Salzburg. It is a mecca for tourists and it exhibits all the demotic paraphernalia such places specialize in. But one also senses a current—maybe it's only an undercurrent—of genuine passion about culture, and not only musical culture. Diagonally across from the festival house is the Rupertinum, a small, fairly new museum (located in an old convent) devoted to modern and contemporary art. On display through October 7 is *Czech Cubism, 1912–1916*, a modest but scholarly exhibition of some 120 paintings, drawings, and sculptures from museums and private collections in the Czech Republic.

The Cubist revolution, with its attack on naturalism and move towards abstraction, was initiated in Paris by Braque and Picasso in 1907. It made its way to Prague a few years later largely through the intervention of the art historian and collector Vincen Kramář. As the exhibition's catalog explains, what was a revolution of aesthetics in Paris became a revolution of *Weltanschauung* in Bohemia. Cubism was not only given

a more psychological inflection by Czech artists, it was absorbed as a way of life. The spirit of Cubism informed literature, theater, film, and music as much as it did the visual arts. It was part of a more general impulse toward liberation from chaos. The German art historian Wilhelm Worringer, writing in 1908, tied the “urge to abstraction” in art to a feeling of “spiritual dread.” Abstract art was an attempt to overcome dread by transcending the messiness of naturalistic space: What is abstract is also under control. Czech Cubism represents a step away from the expressionism of Munch and the realism of Daumier, but it is a step saturated in what the catalog calls “fear and anxiety,” as distinct from the “freedom and playfulness” one finds in Braque and Picasso.

This is the kind of exhibition that one used to see quite often in New York: a quiet gathering of mostly unfamiliar work by mostly unfamiliar artists that has the twin distinction of considerable art-historical importance and, at least occasionally, notable aesthetic achievement—in other words, something new without the bothersome rhetoric of novelty. Of the nine artists included in the exhibition, I believe only Josef Čapek and Emil Filla have much of a reputation in the U.S. Filla's work—especially his painting *The Smoker* (1913–14)—is the aesthetic highpoint of the exhibition. Much of the other work is accomplished; some of it is distinctly fetching.

Czech Cubism is the first exhibition at the Rupertinum under its new director, Agnes Husslein-Arco, a clever, knowledgeable woman who isn't afraid to put artistic excellence before populist pandering. It is an encouraging sign. Salzburg has long been a magnet for lovers of classical music. Gérard Mortier tried to make it a magnet for the pseudo avant-garde. There are plenty of things in Salzburg that betray a continuing sweet tooth for that sort of trendy philistinism. But there are also many suggestions that Salzburg is beginning to reawaken to its traditional role as a capital not of cultural trendiness but of cultural excellence.

NR

■ FILM ■

Such Sweet Sorrow

JOHN SIMON

NEAR the end of his book *It's Only a Movie!: Films and Critics in American Culture*, Raymond J. Haberski Jr. writes (forgive me for quoting at length):

While both [Andrew] Sarris and [Pauline] Kael have out-shone [sic] Simon in historical longevity and influence, all three fell victim to the same plight: irrelevance. Simon's intention . . . was to justify film criticism as a craft that was respectable because filmmaking itself was an art and moviegoers should, in an educated society, be informed critics of that art. Yet what both Sarris and Kael understood, and Simon did not, was that movie criticism was a traditional craft in constant conflict with a disreputable art. The appeal of critics like Sarris and Kael came from their enjoyment of playing with that conflict and speaking to audiences who wanted something between scholarly criticism and synoptic reviews.

Many of the best writers on movies . . . have understood that as mass art, movies exist between the worlds of entertainment and art. Once the perception of them slides farther toward the world of art—and to the margins of scholarly discourse—the pleasure of reading about movies vanishes for large audiences. People clearly were interested in the transition that movies were undergoing during the 1960s. However, once the suspense ended, movies became the province of either entertainment or art. The mystique of movies as a rebellious art—the most vital art of the day—vanished, and with it fell the power critics had to move people and use discussions of movies as a protest against the critical traditions of the past. The transition of the movies into art has, ironically, meant the defeat of the forces that fought hard to get them there.

Ultimately, the prestige was in the fight rather than the victory.

There is something to this, but less than meets the eye—we are not even told which camp won that Pyrrhic victory. The movies, as such, are not a homogenous something that can be nudged either toward entertainment or toward art, depending on a critic's perception of it. Nor is it because some criticism treats them as art that "the pleasure of reading about movies vanishes for large audiences." Large audiences have never bothered with criticism beyond the synopses and ratings in the local papers. When Pauline Kael wrote briefly for the slicks, she soon alienated readers and editors (she dared mock *The Sound of Music*), and was duly sacked.

■
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were like sex—good sex or
bad sex—and extolled what
turned her on.**
■

The reasons so-called serious film criticism enjoyed a short heyday during part of the Sixties and Seventies have nothing to do with an alleged "transition" during the Sixties. Then as now, there were movies of all kinds: art-house films, revivals, retrospectives in special venues, and a vast supply of schlock, mostly from Hollywood. And film meant different things to different people.

What did happen in the late Sixties and early Seventies was that colleges instituted film courses and, eventually, degrees in film studies. This meant that students, either because of course assignments or out of rebellion against them, sought out criticism more stimulating than that of the daily papers. So the opportunity was there for a vivid critic in a lively magazine to make his or her mark.

And it was not only college students who looked for more from movies than they usually got. Some older viewers, who had been through World War II and gone to college on the GI Bill, were dissatisfied with the cultural blandness of the 1950s. For them, perceptive criti-

cism could point the way to what to see, as well as analyze, interpret, and judiciously evaluate it. And it could make short shrift of the trash.

There had, of course, been real film critics before—James Agee, Otis Ferguson, Robert Warshaw, among others—but they were isolated voices. Now things changed. Andrew Sarris had spent a year in Paris, doing research at the Cinémathèque Française, where he fell under the supercuratorial spell of Henri Langlois, who preserved and revered everything that was ever put on film. Sarris also witnessed François Truffaut's inauguration of the revolutionary "politique des auteurs" in an article in *Cahiers du Cinéma*. Style was declared more important than content, and the director was the true *auteur* (author) of a movie, even—indeed, especially—in Hollywood, where if he was good he was able to subvert the studio-imposed clichés with subtle, masterly touches, imprinting what might have been a routine genre film (western, thriller, gangster melodrama) with his irrepressible originality.

Sarris then brought back to America what became known as the *auteur* theory, climaxing in his 1968 book *The American Cinema*, wherein he showed that he had seen virtually every American movie and a passel of others, and rated them all. His success infuriated the other chief popular—or populist—critic, Pauline Kael, who launched a famous screed on auteurism, to which Sarris riposted as best he could.

Sarris and Kael actually had much in common. They both adored "movie movies," i.e., popular entertainments; they both devoured film in inordinate quantities; they both, at the expense of much else, lived in and through movies; they both promoted favorite obscure directors, though not the same ones. And they both had charismatic styles, largely autobiographical. Kael proclaimed that movies were like sex—good sex or bad sex—and extolled what turned her on. Sarris admitted that what drew him to film was "Girls, girls, girls!" But whereas she read like an uninhibited campus bull session, bubbling with impudent wit, his style was more baroque, full of unleashed alliteration and esoteric insider stuff. Pauline took readers into her confidence with raunchy gossip (she

had spies wherever movies were made); Sarris mystagically led them into the arcana of the auteurist cult.

On the other side from the populists were the eggheads. Dwight Macdonald pronounced from Olympian heights, scattering bolts of skewering lightning or sun rays of glittering praise, all backed up by his grounding in literature, politics, and history. Stanley Kauffmann, with a good background in theater and fiction, wrote with gentlemanly sobriety not devoid of wry humor. As for me—well, readers of NR already know. Crudely oversimplified, the populists preferred American genre movies; the eggheads, foreign art films.

Haberski is right in claiming that lusty infighting among these critics, through both antithetical opinions and personal scoffing (in which the pre-*New Yorker* Kael led the way), made for a charged climate in which readers never knew whether to reach for an umbrella or the suntan lotion. What helped critics was prime exposure. Sarris wrote for the *Village Voice*, then the premier organ of the counterculture; Kael for *The New Yorker*, then the apogee of uptown chic or pseudo-chic. Kauffmann's bully pulpit was *The New Republic*, then arguably the most esteemed political journal; Macdonald thundered from *Esquire*, then the favorite men's magazine.

Whether the platforms made the critics or vice versa is immaterial; what mattered were strong and conflicting personalities unimpeded by political correctness, collegial solidarity, Grub Street gimcrackery, or editorial timidity. Why, even the *New York Times* was willing to display side by side Sarris and Simon having at each other. Film criticism was news, not a TV show with raising or lowering of two (or is it ten?) thumbs. The most sparkling account of battles past is Wilfrid Sheed's essay, "Kael vs. Sarris vs. Simon," originating significantly in the *Times Book Review*, and reprinted in Sheed's collection *The Good Word & Other Words*.

My hope in this farewell column is that somehow—despite television, the Internet, and the flood of bland journalism—the old critical prowess can be revived. There was gallantry in that chivalric jousting, even if the knights were frequently errant.

NR

■ TELEVISION ■

Brother to Brother

CHRISTOPHER McEVROY

A PARATROOPER senses danger on all sides. The danger's not *that* way; it's every way. He drops into enemy territory and moves toward each point of the compass—because that's where the trouble is. He engages the enemy with regularity, and his lifespan is rather short.

Stephen Ambrose, in his history *Band of Brothers*, follows a company of the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment that suffered remarkable casualties in World War II. For every slot in "Easy Company," one and a half men would die in the ten months between Normandy and Berchtesgaden (where Hitler's abandoned Eagle's Nest was secured).

This is a statistic that reflects how often Easy Company was in the thick of it, and how regularly it was furnished with replacements. But it was the iron thread of a handful of its members—including Easy's ablest and bravest—that drew Ambrose to the story of how this brotherhood was built and sealed in the last, bloody chapter of the war.

HBO has daringly adapted this story in a ten-part series, which begins September 9. Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks are the executive producers, so one expects a lot—perhaps another *Private Ryan*. Visually, the HBO movie comes close. There is no shortage of artillery blasts, separated limbs, head wounds, and morphine injections, which usually precede a soldier's death. There is a cast of thousands. The locations are convincing replicas of bombed-out Norman towns, and bombed-out Belgian towns, and frozen forests.

As Easy saw so much action, the series benefits from the balanced hands of Hanks and Spielberg—the story itself doesn't get lost in mortars and blood.

Easy, along with Dog and Fox companies, was formed within the 2nd Battalion of the 506th. It was an elite

force, whose members joined voluntarily. Some of them said they did it for the extra \$50 in monthly pay; many didn't stick around long enough to collect. The training at Camp Toccoa, Ga., was grueling. Men were "sorted" out through a natural attrition. Only a third received their silver jump wings.

The company saw its first action on the eve of D-Day, June 5, 1944, depicted thrillingly in the *Brothers* segment directed by Richard Loncraine. A storm of C-47s drone at the viewer. The sky is flak and fire. Below and behind the planes are hundreds of white puffs. The paratroopers descend into the hell of Normandy, and their war begins.

Easy's men were trained by Lt. Herbert Sobel, played by David Schwimmer. Sobel is a taskmaster at Toccoa and the central bad guy, and not the only one in the story of Easy Company. An unsettling aspect of a soldier's history can be its honesty. Men who didn't run from war can nevertheless be disgraced for what they did in it. This is the fate of Sobel, and Ambrose in his book is kinder to this flawed man than is the series.

■ The series benefits from the balanced hands of Hanks and Spielberg. ■

For the most part, the HBO *Brothers* is faithful to Ambrose's. The actors, outside of Schwimmer and perhaps Donnie Wahlberg, are unknowns. Dick Winters is portrayed true-to-text by Damian Lewis. Winters was the heart of Easy Company: stoic, graceful, sober, shrewd, and, of course, brave—all the qualities that helped raise him from lieutenant to battalion executive officer. If he was its heart, the company had several souls. Among them were the lovable drunkard Lewis Nixon (Ron Livingston), the ever-loyal Carwood Lipton (Wahlberg), the South Philly-tough Bill Guarnere (Frank John Hughes), and Ronald Speirs—the drama's legendary warrior, played solidly by Matthew Settle.

Together these men form not only a collection of brothers, but somewhat of a complete man, faults and all.

There are eight directors for ten epi-

sodes, and almost as many writers. Along with a freshness of perspective this brings some difficulties. Each writer-director team wants to send the Ambrose message of bonds built in adversity. So you are apt to get a capsule of how an outsider becomes an insider, at last gaining entrance to the inner sanctum of Easy. This can happen subtly, as when a soldier, having been sufficiently shot at, gets a hand up into a truck where there was no hand before.

Promotions, in the broad wake of the wounded, were regular, and Easy never enjoyed much continuity at the platoon level. Episode to episode, this adds a certain coldness, whereas in the Ambrose history a degree of warmth is constant. Even those who fought in the company and were wounded and managed to return to the line are portrayed as having to earn their way back into Easy's ranks. This repetition can be tiresome, and is out of step with Ambrose's text.

But this is just a tactical error. As a

whole, *Band of Brothers* can wear the label of television epic proudly, and it is another reminder that this is no longer Audie Murphy's war. While honor and valor were abundant in World War II, Ambrose has found less hubristic reasons for why these traits emerge. Like other of Ambrose's citizen-soldiers, the men of Easy Company served one wartime god—the god of going home. Getting there, they realized, meant putting in a good day's work—and doing so every day until finally the end came.

When Private Ryan was released, there were stories of how veterans would leave the theaters saying, "Now *that* was our war." Hollywood, it seemed, had at last gotten it right. If one overlooks the profound failure that was this year's *Pearl Harbor*, a new tradition of "getting it right" may be locking in. It is very much the Ambrose tradition, informed by the testimony of veterans themselves. Of this tradition, Spielberg and Hanks are the excellent caretakers.

Teach Them Well

MICHAEL POTEMRA

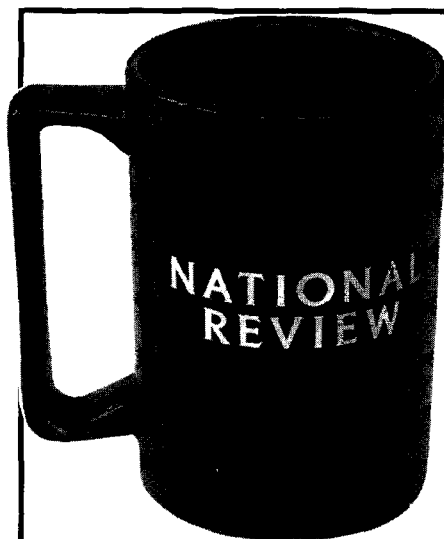
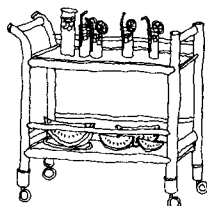
Making Patriots, by Walter Berns (Chicago, 150 pp., \$20)

AMERICA is built on a creed, a system of ideas that are universal. But patriotism—one of the most important factors in ensuring any country's continuing vigor—is a devotion not to abstract ideas but to a particular place. In his thought-provoking and obviously heartfelt new book, constitutional scholar Walter Berns of the American Enterprise Institute explores how we can foster the ancient value of patriotism in what remains even after 225 years a *novus ordo seclorum*, a new kind of country.

Berns begins by acknowledging that we Americans cannot be a new version of the ancient Spartans, who have come to symbolize the traditional understanding of patriotism. In Sparta, the good of the individual was identified with the good of the state: A man's gods are the city's gods, and he achieves his own glory by expanding the city's glory. Not coincidentally, Sparta was a militaristic society; the struggle for national glory was waged in the theater of international conflict.

The American Founding, with its dramatic assertion of the rights of the individual, put the world on notice that the new nation wanted no truck with this traditional concept. We were to be a mercantile republic, with each citizen worshipping his own gods and pursuing his own happiness—in the confidence that these individual pursuits would conduce, generally, to the happiness of the nation. Just how drastic a departure this would be from European precedent is clear from George Washington's historic words to the Hebrew Congregation of Newport, Rhode Island:

It is now no more that tolerance is spoken of, as if it was by the indulgence of one class of people, that



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another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights, for, happily, the government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance, requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens, in giving it on all occasions their effectual support.

Berns quotes these words for two reasons. First, they demonstrate how ingrained in the American tradition is the concept of natural individual rights. Other countries had magnanimously declared that they would "tolerate" even those of their fellow citizens who were Lutherans, or Catholics, or Jews. There is no question of that kind of cultural arrogance in the United States: Here, one can be a Baptist, or a Catholic, or a Jew, or anything else one chooses, not on the sufferance of one's fellow citizens, but because one is a human being endowed by God with natural rights and freedoms deserving of all protection by a just society.

This idea is America's great legacy to the world. But Washington's statement is important for a second reason. In asking that all those who benefit from living in the enlightened republic "demean themselves as good citizens, in giving it on all occasions their effectual support," it raises the question of how that "effectual support"—a vigorous and fervent kind of citizenship—can be preserved in a country in which individuals are not just permitted, but actually *encouraged*, to find their happiness in cultivating their own gardens.

Berns points to Abraham Lincoln as the poet of freedom, the statesman who put into enduring words the reasons why, in this new kind of country, we can and do remain true citizens: not just atomized individuals, but patriots. In an extemporaneous speech on August 22, 1864, thanking Ohio soldiers for their service to the Union, Lincoln said that he wanted to

impress upon them . . . the importance of success in this contest. It is not merely for to-day, but for all time to come that we should perpetuate for our children's children this great and free government, which we have enjoyed all our lives. I beg you to remember this . . . It is in order that

each of you may have through this free government which we have enjoyed, an open field and a fair chance for your industry, enterprise and intelligence: that you may all have equal privileges in the race of life, with all its desirable human aspirations. It is for this the struggle should be maintained, that we may not lose our birthright. . . . The nation is worth fighting for, to secure such an inestimable jewel.

Berns comments that everything Lincoln said to the Ohio soldiers is true: "Their interests were bound up with the country's interests; in a way, their interests, if not identical with the country's interests, were dependent on them."

For each man to do his duty, however, he needs to be inspired with a sense of love; and that's why Lincoln spoke of a "birthright." Traditionally, a birthright pertains to a plot of land or other tangible, inheritable property; Lincoln applies the word to freedom itself, and the happiness that freedom makes possible. It is said that what makes patriotism different from nationalism is that patriotism expresses itself as a love of one's own

country, while nationalism manifests itself more as the dislike of other countries. Lincoln's genius was in understanding—and expressing in memorable words—that the Union is genuinely "our own" in a way that can inspire passion. The freedom of American citizens has become a

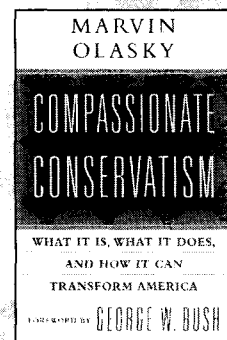
tangible reality, something we can treasure as our own; it is in our bloodstream, uniting us every bit as much as other nations are united by a common race or language.

This is a birthright indeed, one that future generations of Americans should be taught—at home and in school—to cherish. Berns points out that in recent years, we have not been doing an especially good job of civic education. But he also notes that some 70 years after Alexander Hamilton worried that the mercantile republic would not have much military spirit, we waged a Civil War in which 1.8 percent of our population was killed. When freedom is at stake, Americans can rise to the occasion. Berns's book is a brief but stirring hymn to America, not just as an idea but as a reality that moves the hearts of its citizens.

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LISTEN TO WHAT YOU'VE BEEN MISSING

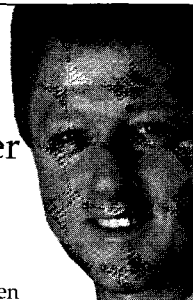


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■ BOOKS IN BRIEF ■

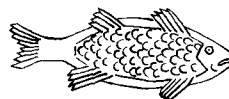
The Competition of Ideas: How My Colleagues and I Built the Hoover Institution, by W. Glenn Campbell (Jameson, 409 pp., \$35)

SINCE its founding by Herbert Hoover in 1919 as an archive of war-related materials, the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace has become one of academia's brightest spots. The list of scholars who have found shelter at Hoover—Friedrich von Hayek, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Milton Friedman, Robert Conquest, and Thomas Sowell, to name just a few—reads like the starting lineup of the 1927 New York Yankees. And the fact that this conservative all-star team has done its work on the campus of liberal

Stanford University (of which the Hoover Institution is a part) makes its achievements all the more impressive.

In *The Competition of Ideas*, Glenn Campbell details his tenure as Hoover's director from 1960 to 1989. During this remarkably fruitful period, the institution rededicated itself to its founder's free-market, anti-totalitarian principles, saw its endowment grow from \$2 million to \$125 million, and established itself as an oasis of clear thinking and sound public policy. Conservatives will seethe as Campbell recounts the repeated attempts by Stanford officials to undermine Hoover's independence and drive its director from office; mostly, though, the reader is left with a sense of appreciation—and gratitude—for the efforts of Campbell and others to make the invaluable work of Hoover's scholars possible.

—CRISTOPHER RAPP



breaths calling out, "Viva Cuba Libre!" or "Viva Cristo Rey!"

Valladares, who was released in 1982 after an international campaign on his behalf, is careful to provide the name of each of the men he meets—particularly those who are executed—aware that most of them would otherwise be forgotten by history. *Against All Hope* is, as Fr. Neuhaus suggested, one of the most important and most human stories of the century just past—as well as, one now feels obliged to mention, the key to understanding what the fuss over Elián González was really about.

—CRISTOPHER RAPP

Declare, by Tim Powers (Morrow, 528 pp., \$25)

THE tradition of "Christian fantasy" is a long and honorable one, with J. R. R. Tolkien, Russell Kirk, and C. S. Lewis being three of the best-loved practitioners. Lewis's *That Hideous Strength* is an acknowledged influence on American fantasist Tim Powers, whose latest novel, the Cold War spy thriller *Declare*, is a worthy addition to the genre.

Andrew Hale is an agent for SOE, Britain's most secret intelligence agency. Over the course of the novel it becomes evident that the Cold War is being waged not merely on the physical plane, but on the spiritual one as well. The Soviet Union is protected by Machikha Nash ("our stepmother"), one of many bloodthirsty djinn spirits who later turn out to be fallen angels. A colony of such beings lives high on Mt. Ararat, and the Soviets seek to establish contact with them, while Hale and SOE attempt to thwart their efforts. As in Powers's previous novels, fictional events are intertwined with meticulously researched historical fact; here, traitor Kim Philby is a primary character.

Hale starts his journey as a Communist and atheist, but ultimately finds himself drawn to the Catholic Church, his spiritual renewal coming about for much the same reason as that of Father Karras in William Peter Blatty's *The Exorcist*: His horrific glimpses of supernatural evil lead him to a firm belief in the existence of transcendent good.

—LAWRENCE PERSON

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Against All Hope: A Memoir of Life in Castro's Gulag, by Armando Valladares, translated by Andrew Hurley (Encounter, 428 pp., \$16.95)

UPON the publication of *Against All Hope* 15 years ago, its author was hailed as the "Cuban Solzhenitsyn." Richard John Neuhaus wrote in NR that the book was crucial to understanding the 20th century. Now returned to print in paperback with a new foreword, Armando Valladares's memoir of his 22 years as a political prisoner in Castro's prisons retains its power.

Valladares was working in a government office when he was arrested in 1960 for refusing to promise uncritical support for the new regime. Over the next two decades he endured torture, deprivation, and forced labor in some of Cuba's most notorious prisons. The details are by turns heartbreaking and inspiring: the everyday terror of prison life; the hunger strikes lasting weeks on end; the inhumanity of the punishment cells at Isla de Pinos prison, where Valladares was forced to live covered in his own excrement; a daring escape attempt involving homemade guards' uniforms; the courage of prisoners before the firing squads, with their last

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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

GWB's Vacation Fixation

NEW YORK, AUGUST 10

IT seems everyone is concerned about Bush and vacations. Some commentary is simply informational, idiomatic questions put and answers given, showing nothing more than workaday curiosity. "How many vacation days a year does the president of the United States get?" Anybody can answer that one, right? "Does he have to schedule his vacation?" Uh, yes. "How does the Secret Service protect the president while he's on vacation?" With guns. "Which members of the staff are required to go on vacation with him?" Eeny, meeny, miney, mo.

We have seen any number of run-downs on presidential days spent away from the White House. We read how many days he spent in Washington, and compare the figures with days spent out of town by his predecessors in their first six months. We can add days spent in Kennebunkport, and view them as vacation time. The toters run into problems when needing to count days spent abroad, because these are presumably work-time days, in no relevant way different from days spent in the White House.

But commentary goes on, and at progressive levels of hostility. Aboard *Slate*, Inc., an exchange comes in between James Wolcott and Zoe Heller, he of *Vanity Fair*, she of the London *Daily Telegraph*. Both are voluptuously splotic on the subject of Bush. From Wolcott: "It seems so right that George Bush should spend part of the day lending his sweat equity to Habitat for Humanity in the Texas heat, a transparent charade to recast himself as a compassionate conservative for all those moderate Republican women voters who are less inclined than men to see the world reduced to ash." (What that means is that W. doesn't particularly care if global warming eliminates life on earth.)

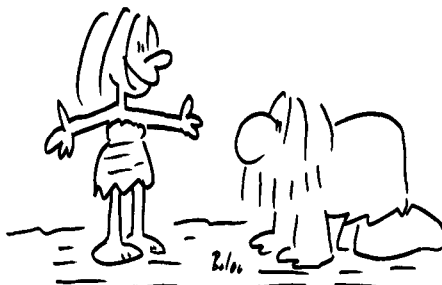
What presidents do on their vacation tends to be the subject of ridicule or condescension. We recall that Ronald Reagan spent time chopping down trees and splitting wood. Abe Lincoln probably wouldn't have spent vacation time

doing this, having had enough of it as a young man. But if he had, somebody (most likely in *Slate*) would have observed that splitting the skulls of Union generals would have been more to the point.

But, on vacation or off, Bush can't win, in Wolcott's view of things. "To me, the most arrogant thing about Bush is his rugged humility. That earnest tone he pipes into his voice when he talks about consulting our allies on the challenges ahead or expresses concern about an issue that he clearly isn't going to do anything about. I don't believe he's a nice, caring soul."

Zoe agrees: "He is a horrid, spoiled little boy and a pretty disastrous president. But I have to say, I am enjoying his brazen displays of sloth. There's something irresistibly funny about his endless holidays and snoozes and tootling around in the gym—and it's only made funnier by his handlers' attempts to cast the hooky-playing as crucial periods of reflection, or whatever."

It doesn't matter what Bush does, he is "on vacation." I am sensitive to the point because year after year, returning from my six weeks in Switzerland, I am asked, How did you enjoy your skiing vacation? I reply limply that I wrote a book. It would not matter if Bush were as industrious as Harry Truman at Key West, that is the slant his critics want to record. But look for the silver lining! Ms. Heller found it: "Bush's lack of appetite for his job may, in fact, be the one way he manages to endear himself to the international community. The Europeans, in particular, tend to be horrified by the work ethic of the American professional class. Bush may have renegeed on Kyoto, but at least this is a guy who understands the importance of a siesta."



"I've learned to walk upright!—
Does it make me look thinner?"

Another correspondent comments with some dismay on the terrain to which Mr. Bush retreats: "GWB's taste in vacation spots fits in right along with rusty pick-up trucks, cheap shotguns, and other ersatz proclamations of Wild West 'manhood' more than a century after the western frontier closed for good. As effete as Kennebunkport and Greenwich may be, they are preferable to dust, tumbleweeds and ignorance."

This correspondent, an entrepreneur of exotic vacations by supersonic air travel, closes his commentary, "It occurs to me that Skull and Bones has rather low standards. How else to explain GWB's being tapped?" There is a protocol against alumni answering such questions, but the answer in this case is, of course, self-spoken: The classmates who elected him to Skull and Bones knew he would become president.

Good Soldiers, Bad Soldiers

NEW YORK, AUGUST 14

IF you want a problem for which there is no solution—zero solution—it is the problem of the war dead. Twenty Koreans, protesting the appearance of the Japanese prime minister at a military shrine, actually severed the tips of their little fingers. That is a pretty vivid form of protest, not to be flirited with by aspiring violinists. Once upon a time I was seated next to the Philippine president at dinner in Manila and he told me of visiting Japan, a necessary diplomatic duty after his election. It was very difficult to do because Ferdinand Marcos had suffered grievously at the hands of the Japanese who invaded the Philippines. He arrived in Tokyo and was taken to the great banquet hall. After dinner he was whisked away to an adjacent chamber. "I saw there fifteen or twenty shriveled old men and suddenly I knew who they were: former generals and admirals of the hated Japanese military." The moment had come for the symbolic offering. "The Japanese prime minister told me to point to any one I liked, and his little finger would instantly be chopped off, as an indication of the sincerity of their repentance."

Marcos prevailed on his hosts to do

something else by way of demonstrating national remorse, but that is the kind of thing the current prime minister walked into early in the week. He had promised, seeking his party's endorsement as leader, to honor the war dead on August 15, which is the day the Japanese surrendered to the United States. Objections immediately were registered—to "honor" that day meant to keep aflame the nationalist fires that consumed Korea, much of China, and the Pacific. So what did the prime minister do? He visited the shrine two days earlier. By such millimetric measurements are political abysses hurdled.

The whole business of the war dead is a recurrent problem. President Reagan ran square into it in 1985, when he found that his schedulers had placed him at a graveyard in Germany that held the bones, not only of regular army Germans, but also of dead SS troops. Elie Wiesel, chief spokesman for Holocaust victims, personally pleaded with the president to withdraw his offer to appear. On the other side were those who counseled that it was best to surmount the question—which Germans died honorably, which dishonorably—and of course there was the diplomatic problem of disrupting a schedule laid out for him by Chancellor Kohl, his host, at a series of celebrations specifically designed to encourage the theme that bygones are bygones. Which is right for diplomats, not right at all for historians or moralists.

There is no way to get around the grotesque historical fact, which is that soldiers fight heroically no matter the character of the government they serve. On a millennial broadcast of *Meet the Press*, Gen. Powell was asked by Tim Russert what did he think was the salient fingerprint of the 20th century, and he replied, the heroism of the American fighting man. I objected, on the grounds above: namely that Russians and Germans also fought valiantly, never mind the cause they were serving. Sen. Moynihan genially intervened, raising his hand to say, "Bill, this is one you won't win."

The Japanese prime minister can't have had in mind, when honoring his war dead, the soldiers who undertook the rape of Nanking. There are buried, we must suppose, in every German military cemetery, the bones of truly evil men. But, to begin with, it's all but impossible to segregate these, and the diplomatic imperative is to move in the other direction, in part from necessity, in part from the sheer difficulty of perform-

ing the moral divisions. This is a historical period in which the Japanese prime minister honors his dead, and in which Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt exchanged toasts with Josef Stalin.

The War Parties At Work

NEW YORK, AUGUST 28

THE bugles are sounding, to rouse not the American military, but the Israeli military. George Will, writing in his syndicated column, wants war. At greater length, in an essay in *The Weekly Standard*, Charles Krauthammer pleads the same case. What they have said is that Israel can't sustain the fusillade of terrorist attacks that have bloodied the state in the devastating eleven months since the breakdown of the peace negotiations. In their view, and the view of others, nothing is evolving on the long, hapless road from Oslo, save the hardening of Palestinian resolution to end the state of Israel.

The analysis is not new. Norman Podhoretz, the critic and former editor of *Commentary*, has said much the same thing for years. The Palestinians, as he put it, are to be likened to the Viet Cong in the Sixties. Their mission was to infiltrate and to engage in terrorism and to prepare themselves to do the same thing for year after year after year until South Vietnam, toppled by a final thrust of military force, succumbed. Israel does not suffer notably from infiltration. The enemy is over there, at the other end of the line. Within Israel, there are no Viet Cong, though that too could change if Israeli Palestinians came to believe that the land of their forefathers might one day be returned to them. Many South Vietnamese were friendlier to the north when it became plain that the north was taking over the country.

The philosopher-strategist James Burnham once remarked to his colleagues at *National Review*, "You know, it's simply not true that wars never settle anything." That would appear a cliché, but the words were spoken at a time when advocates of peace-at-any-price were proposing capitulation at every point on the globe where the Communists had struck a salient. Of course, wars can accomplish things, as the Carthaginians and the Nazis learned. But to generate a war requires a reason-

able sense of capabilities, ours, and theirs.

Mr. Will thinks in terms of a war of three or four days, no less devastating for its brevity. Mr. Krauthammer pretty well goes along. Both agree that terrorists need to be hunted down and killed, that the infrastructure of the Palestinian Authority should be destroyed, and that to do this includes the destruction of cultural facilities through which Arafat coaxes, poisons, and deploys. Mr. Will mentions the broadcasting house, which a while back enjoined that "all weapons must be aimed at the Jews . . . whom the Koran describes as monkeys and pigs . . . We will enter Jerusalem as conquerors. . . . Blessings to he who shot a bullet into the head of a Jew." His own vitriol is directed toward home. "The State Department, that brackish and bottomless lagoon of obtuseness, where Secretary of State Colin Powell has gone native with disgusting speed . . ."

And both Will and Krauthammer insist that Sharon needs to act very quickly, before the demoralization of Israel turns fatal.

The student swoons at the force of the argumentation, athwart the dandied protocols of modern history. We're being told we can *blot it out*—destroy the hard Arafat-Palestinian virus. And if it regenerates? We will need a wall. A wall? Yes, a wall that would gird Israel from any future mobilization of energetic Palestinian irredentism. Build a wall to seal against its creepy aggressions. Wasn't that tried, sort of, in Vietnam? Yes, it was tried, but it proved porous, both north and west. Wasn't that tried in Berlin? Yes—and it worked, actually, but the radiations of Western thought penetrated cement and steel. The Palestinians, unless they reordered their cosmology, could hardly hope to threaten an Israeli wall with effective philosophical penetration.

The single question emerges from it all. Can Israel do something about the rain of blood that is causing life in Israel to be that of a society at war, but without such psychological reassurance as is got from the prospect of victory at war?

And the move has to be Sharon's, without any direction from the White House. This isn't, and oughtn't to be made, Mr. Bush's war, no more than the terrorist war inside Ireland should get any closer to us than George Mitchell. But Mr. Bush can provide the essential superpower cover, which Israel will need.

—UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

FLORENCE KING

BOY, did I strike a nerve with my "Igno" column. The letters poured in, and every one was positive. Not only did you outdo yourselves in your impassioned support, but some of the hair-raising examples you cited from your own contact with the breed were better than mine.

The letters were also notable for a corollary subject that kept popping up. Many of you asked what caused me to become such a voracious reader. I'm often asked this, so I might as well answer it here and now, but if it isn't the inspirational story you expected, don't say I didn't warn you.

There was nothing unusual about my childhood reading: *Nancy Drew*, *Lassie Come Home*, *My Friend Flicka*. Nor was there anything unusual about my pubertal reading: *GWTW*, *Forever Amber*, *Anya Seton*, *Frank Yerby*.

It wasn't until high school that I turned into a case study for a psychiatric conference on bibliomania. The impetus was not high school itself—I was no more miserable than anyone else and a lot happier than some—but an oppressive situation at home. Namely, my grandmother's collection of long-suffering Southern female martyrs who sat in our kitchen talking about how they worked their fingers to the bone "doing for" others without a thought for themselves.

Women in general are susceptible to the selflessness trap, but Southern women get carried away by it, seeing themselves as the plantation mistress going forth to do good on a grand scale. Whilst others sleep, she is abroad in the night, tirelessly nursing the sick and being acclaimed an angel of mercy by adoring throngs of invalids. The reality of her actual social class has nothing to do with it: In her mind's eye she's the lady of the manor and that's that.

I thought of them as the "moist women" because the glow of self-sacrifice seemed to condense on them, though in view of their broad experience with uri-

nals it might have been something else. Most of them had bedridden relatives, usually husbands, whose problems required some form of regular, hands-on help. When I got home from school they would be knee-deep in discussions of "seepage" and "drainage," blissfully unaware of the one-upmanship that pulsed through their accounts. It was obvious that the woman who merely had to empty her husband's urinal felt inferior to the woman who had to change her husband's pads, who in turn felt inferior to the champ who catheterized her father-in-law four times a day.

I recoiled from them with every fiber of my budding womanhood but I didn't know why until the day one of them turned to me with a mournful smile and said, "A bright girl like you should go to nursing school."

That's when I started reading as if my life depended on it—because it did. My instincts told me that if I read enough books, I wouldn't be "like them," so I hurled myself at the classics, starting with *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights*, and *Madame Bovary*.

My reading had no plan or pattern to it. When the martyrs discussed reaching down somebody's throat to pull out a swallowed denture, I swallowed *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Dombey and Son*, and *Les Misérables*. When they held forth on the various stones and clots somebody had "passed," I took in *The Return of the Native*, *Vanity Fair*, and *McTeague*.

We were shackled together in neurotic symbiosis; when they stepped it up, I had to step it up. Things got critical when they abandoned seepage 'n' drainage for the greater glories of stoppage 'n' blockage. An argument over whose husband's bowels were in worse shape led to a volley of one-upmanship between Ole Miz A, who merely had to empty her husband's bedpan, and Ole Miz B, whose husband wore a bag. But just as she was preening herself, Ole Miz C chimed in with the news that her husband was so impacted that she recently had had to start excavating him "by hand" every third day.

"The doctor said there was a long-

handled instrument he could get me, but an iced-tea spoon works just fine."

War and Peace, *Crime and Punishment*, *The Brothers Karamazov*, *Anna Karenina*, *Death in Venice*, *The Charterhouse of Parma*, *The Red and the Black*, *Thérèse Raquin*, *Nana*, *Germinal*, *Jude the Obscure*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Main Street*, *Babbitt*, *Elmer Gantry*, *Jean-Christophe*, *Fathers and Sons*, *On the Eve*.

I told them about that last one out of sheer devilment, just to see what they'd say. "It's about an aristocratic Russian girl named Elena who marries a Bulgarian revolutionary named Insarov, but he dies of TB and she becomes a nurse in the Crimean War."

I figured it would launch a rousing seminar about gangrene, but to my surprise they responded with expectant little smiles. I realized why when Granny voiced their collective thought.

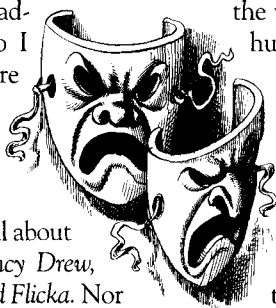
"An army hospital is the best place in the world to catch another husband. Wounded soldiers get a pension."

Yes, indeed. A smart girl who played her iced-tea spoons right could catch a husband who had only three inches of intestine left, spend the best years of her life scooping him out every hour on the hour, and wind up being called an angel of mercy instead of a dominatrix.

My 16-year-old instincts were on the mark: My reading binge saved me from woman's lot by increasing my natural tendency to selfishness. Reading requires silence, solitude, and inwardness, priorities a woman must guard and cultivate if she is to live in that feminist abode called "a room of one's own." I did, and that's where I live.

It takes a teenager with more energy than taste to get through certain books, e.g., Charles Reade's gigantic medieval epic, *The Cloister and the Hearth*. I couldn't read it today if you held an iced-tea spoon to my throat, but at 16 I didn't skip a word. It has faded from my memory now, except for one perfect sentence in the proper Victorian love scene that it helps to think of whenever I see writhing bodies on TV:

"She came to him glowing with two beauties never before united, an angel's radiance and a woman's blushes." **NR**



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